the folk, roots and world music magazine

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tulhmoody

Issue No. 47 autumn 2010 \$5.99



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& The Grand Cariboo Opry • Oct 21 Linda Tillery & The Cultural Heritage Choir • Oct 29 & 30*

Lunch At Allen's . Nov 3

Kat Danser • Nov 5

Alexander Sevastian** • Nov 7

Montreal Guitar Trio with special guests

California Guitar Trio • Nov 13

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Quartango • Jan 20

Evgeny Starodubtsev, International

Honens Laureate** • Jan 23

Loudon Wainwright III . Jan 26

CIRCA (Dance) • Jan 28

46 Circus Acts

in 45 Minutes* • Jan 29

Trudeau Stories (Theatre) • Feb 9

Leo Lionni's Swimmy, Frederick

& Inch by Inch* • Feb 20

Red Stick Ramblers • Feb 24

Justin Hines • Feb 25

Margie Gillis (Dance) . Mar 16

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Emilie-Claire Barlow . Mar 25

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LYNN MILES

FALL FOR BEAUTY

IN STORES & ONLINE

OCTOBER 5, 2010

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LUNCH AT ALLEN'S

MORE LUNCH AT ALLEN'S

Jordan, Ian Thomas, Murray McLauchlan and Cindy Church blends together re-imagined and marries them with brand new tracks exclusive to the record,

IN STORES & ONLINE **OCTOBER 5, 2010** Canadian songwriter super group Lunch at Allen's consists of Marc 'More Lunch at Allen's' seamlessly performances of well-loved classics collective creativity that only good friends could bring to life.

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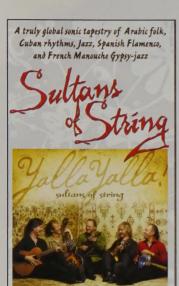
OS WHITE SKY











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penguin eggs

Canada's Folk, Roots and World Music Magazine Issue No. 47 Autumn, 2010 Issn: 73060205 10942 - 80 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta Canada, T6G 0R1 Tel: (780) 433-8287 Fax: (780) 437-4603 www.penguineggs.ab.ca e-mail: penguineggs@shaw.ca Editor: Roddy Campbell Managing Editor: Annemarie Hamilton

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This magazine takes its name from Nic Jones's wonderful album Penguin Eggs - a collection of mainly traditional British folk songs revitalized with extraordinary flair and ingenuity. Released in Britain in 1980, it has grown into a source of inspiration for many young, gifted performers.

Nic, sadly, suffered horrific injuries in a car crash in 1982 and has never fully recovered. He now seldom performs. His care and respect shown for the tradition and prudence to recognize the merits of innovation makes Penguin Eggs such an outrageously fine recording. This magazine strives to reiterate that spirit. Nic Jones's Penguin Eggs is available through Topic Records.

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editorial

The week I interviewed Enoch Kent, Scottish broadcaster, journalist and trade union activist Jimmy Reid died. We made mention of his passing. They knew each other, having grown up in the same socialist circles in and around Glasgow. Reid made his name as a shop steward during the 1971-72 Upper Clyde Shipbuilders work-in. At the time, the UCS found itself in a cash crunch despite millions of pounds in orders. British Prime Minister Ted Heath considered liquidating the UCS consortium of shipyards with job losses in excess of 8,000. Instead of striking. the unions closed the gates to management and continued working without pay. Their discipline, and the eloquence of Reid in particular, gained international support. The government eventually capitualted.

Glasgow has a long, colourful history of working-class orators and militants. Arguably, the most famous was the schoolteacher John Maclean (1879-1923), MacLean, an outspoken opponent of the First World War, was arrested on numerous occasions for his political beliefs. None of this history, of course, was taught in Scottish schools. Indeed, I had never heard of John Maclean or the "Red Clyde" until I came to Canada and picked up Dick Gaughan's LP No More Forever, On it Dick sings an a cappella version of Hamish Henderson's The John Maclean March. As the sleeve notes state, the song celebrates Maclean's triumphant return to Glasgow after his release from prison in 1918 and the ecstatic welcome he received from the Clydeside workers. You're not likely to find that kind of detail on iTunes.

Whatever, it's a profound piece of writing and inspired me to delve deeper. And what I discovered thrilled me to the core - a litany of principled people who stood their ground and fought back when faced with harsh political, social and economic confrontation.

I dare say, Enoch Kent's The Murder of Ginger Goodwin, featured on his new release, Take A Trip With Me, has had a similar effect. I now want to know more about the pacifist and trade union leader Goodwin - assassinated for his courage and dignity.

In this day an age, where celebrity status is often gained through nefarious behaviour, it's comforting to know that honorable personalities can still achieve prominence through a simple melody and a few well chosen words. It's called a folk song isn't it?

- By Roddy Campbell

cover feature

36 . . . Basia Bulat sings a cappella Polish folk songs, plays autoharp and invokes comparisons to Tracy Chapman, Odetta and ... er ... the Velvet Underground. One thing, though, on which most readily concur: Bulat is someone a little bit special.

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quotable

"Nursery rhymes are often very dark. I have a really sinister one for the next album that's all about Napoleon Bonaparte eating children... I'm a big ballad girl. I love the gory songs." – Fay Hield

"For the production of the latest album, my research scaled around 6,000 songs. I recorded about 400 of them and, in the end, retained a hundred or so. After working them out with the guitar, I ended up keeping 13." – Bernard Simard

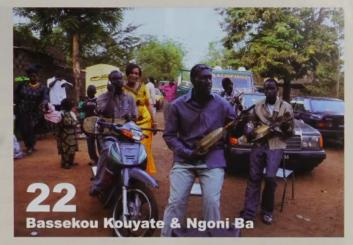
'The rules are . .you sing from your own tradition. I'm fed up listening to boys from Kentish Town singing skiffle songs about I Don't Want Your Greenback Dollar and wouldn't know what a greenback dollar is.' — the late Ewan MacColl sets Enoch Kent straight

sheet music

61... The Pawnshop Window

- By Enoch Kent

65... Two traditional Quebec fiddle tunes: le quadrille à ma tante and Chip and Rant - Arranged by Pascal Gemme









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ruth moody's top 10

Bruce Cockburn
The Charity of Night (True North)

Leonard Cohen
Songs of Leonard Cohen (Columbia

Bob Dylan

blood off the fracks (C

Dick Gaughan Handful of Earth (Topic

Emmylou Harris Wrecking Ball (Elektra)

Andy Irvine & Paul Brady
Andy Irvine & Paul Brady (Multigan)

Kate &Anna McGarrigle

Kate & Anna McGarrigle (Warner Joni Mitchell

Gillian Welch

Neil Young

Ruth Moody's latest record, The Garden, is on Red House Records See the Penguin Eggs feature on Ruth on page 32.



fred's records top 5

1. Amelia Curran

2. Great Big Sea
Safe Upon The Shore (WEA)

3. The Once

4. Gramercy Riffs
It's Heartbreak (Independ

Matthew Byrne

Based on album sales for, May, June and July at Freds Records, 198 Duckworth Street, St. John's, NL, ATC 1G5



sillions top 10

Gilles Vigneault
 Retrouvailles (Disques Tempête)

2. Gotan Project Tango 3.0 (XL)

3. Martha Wainwright
Sons fusils, ni souliers, à Paris (Repuiblic of Music)

4. Zaz

5. Fred Pellerin

6. Elisapie Isaac
There Will Re Stors (Pheron)

7. Agnès Jaoui Dons Mon Pays (T't ou Tard

8. Natalie Merchant
Legve Your Sleep (Nonesuch

9. B.O.F.
Crazy Heart (New West Records)

10. Chloé Sainte-Marie

Nitshisseniten E Tshissenitamin mme un jardin la nuit (Gsi Musique)

Compiled from May, June and July sales at Sillons, 1149 Avenue Cartier, Quebec, QC, G1R 2S9.

groundfloor music top 10

Sarah Harmer
 Oh Little Fire (Cold Snap

2. Keith Jarrett & Charlie Haden

3. Jack Johnson
To The Seg (Brushfire)

4. Oliver Schroer
Freedom Row (Borealis

5.

Ray Lamontagne
Till The Sun Turns Block (RCA)

6. Mary Gauthier
The Foundling (Razor & Tie)

7. Natalie Merchant
Leave Your Sleep (Nonesuch

8. James Taylor & Carole King
Live At The Troubadour (Hear)

9. Fred Eaglesmith

10. Ali Farka Toure & Toumani Diabate

Based on album sales for May, June and July at Groundfloor Music, 13 Quebec Street, Guelph, Ontario, N1H 2T1

highlife top 10

- Frazey Ford
 Obidish (Network)

 Gotan Project
- Tongo 3.0 (XL)

 3. Bettye Layette
- 4. Sharon Jones & The Dap Kings
 | Learned The Hord Way (Daptone)

Interpretations (Ami

- 5. Kottarashky
- 6. Lee Fields
- My World (Do Right)

 7. Tony Allen
- Secret Agent (Nonesu
- 9. Adham Shaikh
 Universal Frequencies (Sonicturtle)
- 10. Youssou N'dour

Based on album sales for May, June and July at Highlife Record 1317 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC, VSL 3X5

amazon us top 5

- 1. Ray LaMontagne
 God Willin' & The Creek Don't Rise (Sony)
- 2. Charlie Haden
 Rambling Boy (Deccs)
- 3. Leonard Cohen
 Songs From The Road (Columbia Legacy)
- 4. Rosanne Cash

5.

The Weepies
Be My Thrill (Nettwerk Records)

Based on world and folk album sales at Amazon US – www.amazon. com/Folk-Music/





ten years ago

1. Alison Krauss
New Favourite (Rounder)

A Man Under The Influence (Bloodshot

- 2. John Hammond Wicked Grin (Pointblank)
- 3. Lucinda Williams
 Essence (Lost Highway)
- 4. Manu Chao
 Proxima Estaction Esperanza (Virgin
- 5. Aleiandro Escovedo
- 6. Ani DiFranco
 Revelling Reckoning (Righteous Babe)
- 7. Sarah Harmer
- 8. Various Artists
 Avolon Blues: A Tribute To Mississippi John Hurt (Ryko
- 9. The Be Good Tanyas
 Blue Horse (20 Room)
- 10. Whiskeytown

Based on the folk, roots and world music charts featured in Penguin Eggs, Autumn Issue, No. 11, 2001.

soundscapes top 10

- 1. Black Keys
- 2. Sarah Harmer Oh Little Fire (Cold Snap
- 3. Sadies
 Darker Circles (Outs
- 4. Justin Rutledge
 Early Widows (Six Shoost
- 5. Tallest Man On Earth
- Wild Hunt (Dead Oceans)

 6. Phosphorescent
- 7. She & Him
 Volume 2 (Merce)
- 8. The Beauties
- 9. Daniel Romano
- Workin' For The Music Man (You've Changed)

 10. Kris Kirstofferson

Based on album sales for May, June and July at Sor 572 College St., Toronto, On, M6G 1B3.

Please Don't Tell Me How The Story Ends (Light In The Attic)

ckua top 20

- . The New Pornographers
 Together (Matador)
- 2. Herbie Hancock
- The Imagine Project (Sons)

 3. Jeff Healey
- Lust Call (Stony Plain Records)

 4. Chris Joss
- Monomoniacs Vol. 1 (ESL Music

 5. Sarah Harmer
- 0h Little Fire (Cold Snap)

 6. David Byrne & Fatboy Slim
- Here Lies Love (Nonesuch)
- 7. Justin Rutledge
 The Early Widows (Six Shooter Records)
- 8. Fred Eaglesmith
- 9. Tim Hus
 Hockeylown (Stony Plain Records)
- 10. Little Miss Higgins
 Across The Plains (LMH Music)
- 11. Ruth Purves Smith & the 581
 Out In The Storm (Independent)
- 12. Magnolia Buckskin
 Magnolia Buckskin (Independent)
- 13. Stars
 The Five Ghosts (Vagrant Records)
- 14. Janiva Magness
 The Devil Is An Angel Too (Alligator Records)
- 15. Natalie Merchant Leave Your Sleep (Nonesuc
- 16. Meaghan Smith
- 17. Son of Dave
- Shake a Bone (Karrel)

 18. Jakob Dylan
- Women And Country (Columbia)
- 19. The Sadies
 Darker Circles (The Album) (Yep Rock Records)
- 20. Sharon Jones & The Dap Kings | Learned The Hard Way (Daptone)

Based on the most-played folk, roots and world music dics on ckus radio - www.ckus.org throughout May, June and July.



News-Gossip-Rumour-Tattle

Dubbed the "goddess of Canadian blues" by CBC Radio's Sheelagh Rogers, Rita Chiarelli has teamed up with acclaimed Canadian film director Bruce McDonald and Emmy and Oscar-nominated producer Erin Faith Young to make the documentary Music From The Big House. The film follows Chiarelli as she takes a musical pilgrimage to the Louisiana State Maximum Security Penitentiary, notoriously known as Angola Prison, the largest maximum security prison in the U.S. Once the bloodiest prison in America, its prisoners have included Huddie Ledbetter (Leadbelly), Robert Pete Williams and Freddy Fender. The folklorist Frederick Oster recorded Angola Prison Worksongs there for Folklyric Records in 1959. It is also the setting for Sister Helen Prejean's book Dead Man Walking, which became an Oscar-winning film starring Sean Penn.

While at the prison, Chiarelli and her band met and performed with inmates serving life sentences for murder, rape and armed robbery, who have now found meaning in their lives through music.

Music From The Big House has previewed at the New York International Documentary Film Festival and the Los Angeles International Film Festival and will show at the Calgary, Edmonton and Montreal film festivals this autumn. CBC has purchased the rights to air it on television after a year of various screenings.

Chiarelli has worked previouly with Bruce McDonald. He included her *Have* You Seen My Shoes?on the soundtrack of his film Roadkill (1989). And she and Colin Linden also recorded Bob Dylan's Highway 61 Revisited for McDonald's film Highway 61 (1991).

Erin Faith Young earned an Academy Award and Emmy nominations for the short documentary *Hardwood*.

Chiarelli has also produced Calling All People: The Songs of TemPest Gale. Tem-Pest Gale, a talented folk/punk poet, was murdered Nov. 18, 2009, on Hornby Island, BC. The album features an all-star roots cast that includes Rick Fines, Suzie Vinnick, David Gogo, Marc Atkinson and Tim Williams. It's available through Chiarelli's label. Mad Iris Music.

B 55 B

Affable, multi-talented musician, luthier, author and record label executive **Grit Laskin** is the recipient of the 2010 **Estelle Klein** Award. Laskin previously received this award in 2003 as a member of **Friends of Fiddlers Green**, with whom he has performed for almost a quarter of a century. **Pete Seeger** and **The Tannahill Weavers** are amongst those who have covered Laskin's songs. His discography includes four solo albums and he has also accompanied musicians as diverse as **Raffi** and **Stan Rogers**. Laskin is also a co-founder of the Canadian Folk Music Awards and

Borealis Records, which celebrates its 15th anniversary next year.

Largely known internationally for his elaborate, intricate inlay decorating his guitars, Laskin's instruments are played by the likes of flamenco guitarist **Paco Pena** and **James Keelaghan**.

The Estelle Klein Award, which recognizes the work of an individual or group that has made significant contributions to Ontario's folk music community, will be presented during the Gala Dinner at the 24th Annual OCFF Conference, being held Oct. 14-17 in Ottawa, ON.

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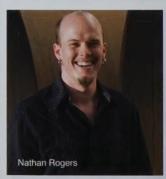
A new all-star Canadian folk trio appears in the making. Nathan Rogers, Leonard Podolak and J.D. Edwards have held rehearsals in Winnipeg, with an eye to performing and possibly recording. No dates have been set for performances.

Rogers had a close call in August while aboard the cruise ship the Clipper Adventurer. It struck an uncharted rock in three metres of water in the Northwest Passage. Rogers was performing nightly during the cruise. Like all other passengers, he was evacuated to the icebreaker Amundsen and brought to Kugluktuk, Nunavut, located about 55 nautical miles east, and then flown to Edmonton. Ironically, one of the best-known songs of his father, Stan Rogers, is Northwest Passage.

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After an absence of 28 years, Nic Jones made a surprise and emotional appearance at Sidmouth Folk Festival in Devon, England, Aug. 5. The event was supposedly a tribute to the man and his music, and featured such notable folk luminaries as Martin Simpson, Chris Wood, Jim Moray and Jon Boden, yet Jones got up and sang three songs with Pete and Chris Coe. Jon Loomes and Paul Sartin in a recreation of his 1970s band Bandoggs. The short set included a version of Loudon Wainwright's Swimming Song. Jones, of course, recorded Penguin Eggs-the album from which this magazine takes its name-long considered one of the greatest folk albums ever recorded. Nic, tragically, was badly injured in a car crash in 1982 and, until Sidmouth, had not performed in public since.

000

Plans are well underway for the launch of a new folk festival in Prince Edward Island. The Malpeque Folk Music Festival is tentatively scheduled for the weekend of Aug. 5-7, 2011. Mitch Podolak, founder of the Winnipeg and Vancouver Folk Music Festivals, will act as interim artistic director for the first event and then hand over the reins to Rob Oakie, the current executive director of Music Prince Edward Island. The festival will be held in the beautiful Cabot Beach Provincial Park and will include considerable facilities for camping. Malpeque is 75 minutes from Charlottetown.

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Veteran Edmonton, AB, blues harmonica whiz Rusty Reed has opened a new music venue. Rusty Reed's House of Blues opened in June at 12402 118th Ave., NW, Edmonton. The venue is renovated inside and

out and offers a new PA and stage. It will feature nightly live performances Friday through Sunday with Saturday afternoons reserved for blues jams from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

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Harper Collins will publish the memoirs of **Bruce Cockburn**. The as-yet-untitled autobiography is set for release in April 2012. "Bruce's decades-long devotion to social justice and spiritual depth is a perfect fit for our list. We're excited to be publishing his memoir," said Collins spokesman **Mark Tauber**.

Meanwhile, Cockburn continues to work on his first studio album since 2006's *Life Short Call Now*. Recording sessions have taken place in Bath, ON, Nashville, TN, and San Francisco, CA. Tentatively called *Small Source of Comfort*, it is scheduled for release March 1 on True North Records and features the likes of **Annabelle Chvostek** and Colin Linden. Initial reports indicate that it's "very acoustic, very rhythmic, and highly evocative".

Still with True North Records, it has signed country legend **Charlie Louvin**. Performing with his brother, **Ira**, as **The Louvin Brothers**, their lush harmonies earned the duo a place in the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2001. True North will release Charlie's *The Battles Rage On*, a collection of war songs, this autumn.

000

Rounder Records is set to release Louisiana Cajun and Creole Music: The Newport Field Recordings on Sept. 28. Recorded between 1964-67 by Ralph Rinzler—working for the Newport Folk Foundation, and at the suggestion of Alan Lomax—the collection features 27 tracks on a single disc. Initially released by Rounder on several

albums in the mid-'70s, these recordings are considered to have helped save Cajun music by exposing it to a national and international audience rather than just regional. Performers on the anthology include the Balfa Brothers, Bois-Sec Ardoin and Canray Fontenot, Austin Pitre, and Adam and Cyprien Landreneau.

The packaging contains many previously unpublished photographs and extensive liner notes by various writers in the PDF embedded in the disc.

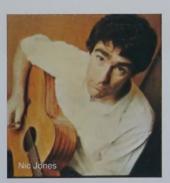
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Madison Violet took top honours and a first prize of \$20,000 in the Maxell Song of the Year category from the 13th annual John Lennon Songwriting Contest. The duo made up of Brenley MacEachern and Lisa MacIsaac won for their song The Ransom. Lennon's widow, Yoko Ono, recognized their success with a brief post on her Twitter page.

MacEachern and MacIsaac met almost a decade ago at an open mic in Toronto, and won the 2009 Vocal Group of the Year at the Canadian Folk Music Awards for their album *No Fool for Trying*.

000

The topsy turvy word of music magazines recently saw the end of *Paste* and the start of the online e-zine *Driftwood*. *Paste* suspended printing Sept. 1. Its struggles with mounting debt were made public last year when it made an appeal for financial support to its readers. But the prolonged downturn of ad revenue has forced the closure. *Paste* started as a quarterly in 2002 and quickly grew to a bi-monthly, which featured a suitable offering of Americana amongst its musical profiles. Management are now considering their options. Subscribers can









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Jim Byrnes "My Walking Stick" - Blues Recording Of The Year

The Sojourners "The Sojourners" - Roots Recording Of The Year (Group)

John Wort Hannam "Queen's Hotel" - Roots Recording Of The Year (Solo)

Steve Dawson & Sheldon Zaharko - Engineer Of The Year

Black Hen Music - Label Of The Year



still access the digital June/July issue.

The newly formed *Driftwood Music Magazine* is staffed by volunteer writers who have written or edited for *Dirty Linen* and various other publications.

"Our goals are simply to continue the tradition of *Dirty Linen*: publish some of the best writing about the best in folk, world, and roots music, but gently expand the genres to cover indie and some AAA rock," says editor Jack Hunter. For more information, go to www.driftwoodmagazine.com/

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The Gibson Guitar iPhone app has now been downloaded more than a million times worldwide. An app, or application, is what Apple calls third-party software programs developed specifically for the iPhone.

The Gibson App includes a traditional chromatic guitar tuner, a metronome, more than 30 chord charts with easy-to-read finger positions and lessons from Gibson's Learn and Master series. For more, go to www.Gibson.com

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While folk-punk rabble rousers The Pogues released dates of a December "Farewell Christmas Tour" of the U.K., it appears the announcement was not entirely accurate nor reached by consensus. Guitarist Phil Chevron took umbrage at the goodbye tour notices, calling it "a marketing ploy" by his colleagues. "This claim does not come from me." he wrote on the group's official message board (www.pogues.com), "and I will neither be supporting it nor discussing it." The tour begins in Glasgow Dec. 13 and winds up Dec. 21 in London.

In response to Chevron's post, bandmate and tin whistle player Spider Stacy posted a note of clarification stressing the band were not breaking up: "This is the last Christmas tour for the foreseeable future," wrote Stacy. "That's not to say we won't be showing up at festivals here and there or maybe even the odd gig around the U.K. and Ireland and certainly in Europe. But we're tired of dragging our weary, freezing carcasses around these drowning islands every December, so we're going to give it a rest before you get tired of it, too."

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Category winners at the 2010 Blues Awards held in Memphis, TN, in May included Acoustic Album of the Year: David Maxwell and Louisiana Red, You Got to Move: Traditional Blues Album of the Year: Super Chikan, Chikadelic; Historical Album of the Year: Muddy Waters, Chess—Authorized Bootleg; Contemporary Blues Album of the Year: Tommy Castro, Hard Believer; Album of the Year: Joe Louis Walker, Between a Rock and the Blues; Acoustic Artist of the Year: Louisiana Red; B.B. King Entertainer of the Year: Tommy Castro; Traditional Blues Male Artist of the Year: Duke Robillard; Traditional Blues Female Artist of the Year: Debbie Davies; Best New Artist Debut: Monkey Junk, Tiger In Your Tank

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Bob Dylan will display, Sept. 4 to Jan. 30, some 40 acrylic paintings and eight drawings from his Brazil Series commissioned by Copenhagen's Statens Museum for Kunst. "It was an honour to be asked and a thrilling challenge," Dylan said in a statement published by the Danish museum. "I chose Brazil as a subject because I have been there many times and I like the atmosphere." Compiled between 2009 and the middle of this year, the paintings show scenes from daily life in the cities, slums and the countryside and include depictions of wine growers, Gypsies, politicians, gamblers and gangsters. Dylan displayed his last canvas collection Drawn Blank Series in Germany in 2007 and in Britain in 2008.

0 0 0

I am a DJ-I am what I DI

"I came to the legendary CKUA as a listener; my ears trained, expanded, stretched to their limit by Bill Coull, Sev Sabourin and Tony Dillon-Davis," writes Monica Miller. "The sound that is now CKUA—the gravity-defying blend—was nurtured by people like them at a time when the airwaves were wild and free. Hearned from the masters. Now, having just celebrated the 10th anniversary of *How I Hear It*, I arrive at 'work' five days a week with a blank slate of two hours and 45 minutes in front of me—and my task is to play whatever pops into my crazy of 'head. And here's the wacky part; they pay me to do it! Wow."



How I Hear Ir can be heard weekday afternoons from 12:15 p.m. to 3 p.m. MDT on CKUA Radio at 94.9 FM (Edmonton), 580 AM, or at www.ckua.org/. Friday's program can be heard in rebroadcast Monday from 12 midnight to 3 a.m.

Swansongs



Ben Keith 1937-2010

Ben Keith, who died in La Honda, CA, on July 26, 2010, was a Kansas-born multi-instrumentalist and record producer with a profound Canadian connection, writes Ken Hunt. When Buddy Cage left Great Speck-led Bird – the country rock band formed by Ian and Sylvia Tyson – in 1971 to join the New Riders of the Purple Sage, Keith took his place. He would record the LP You Were On My Mind (1971) with them and appear frequently on the weekly Ian Tyson Show made for Toronto's CFTO-TV.

Keith was also one of the lines of continuity running clear through Neil Young's work. He was born in Fort Riley, KS, on March 6, 1937, and grew up in Bowling Green, KY, before settling in Nashville aged 19. Christened Bennett Keith Schaeufele, he adopted his shortened stage name at the suggestion of a Nashville musicians' union official who thought it lacked something in snappiness.

In Nashville he entered into the ranks of session players, working with, among others, Faron Young and Patsy Cline (the signature steel part on *I Fall To Pieces* is his). Future work included playing with Bob Dylan, Emmylou Harris, Waylon Jennings, Ringo Starr and Willie Nelson. Watching top Nashville producers at work informed his own later style of production, notably the major production coup of Jewel's massive-selling *Pieces of You* (1995). He also fitted in two solo albums. *To A Wild Rose* (1984) and the guest star-laden *Seven Gates* (1994), released in an expanded edition as

Christmas at the Ranch (2008), with J.J. Cale, Johnny Cash, Nicolette Larson and Neil and Pegi Young crooning around the Christmas tree.

Keith had a gift for getting a tune out of stringed or keyboard instruments. His connection with Young began with the sessions for Young's Harvest (1972). When he arrived for the session, the scratch bandeventually named the Stray Gators-was already recording, so he set up and joined in. Half an album later introductions were made. Over nigh on 20 albums, he fed his spirit into Young's sessions. Listen to him close-shadowing Young on steel on Harvest and Out On The Weekend or Albuquerque and Roll Another Number (For the Road) on the sorrow-drenched Tonight's The Night (1973, released in 1975) for full measures of what Ben Keith could deliver.

Ate Doornbosch 1930-2010

Few cultures, writes Ken Hunt, have an individual that towers over a nation's comprehension and acceptance of its native folk culture to compare with Ate Doornbosch and the Netherlands. In his lifetime Doornbosch was rightly compared with the U.S. field collector and folklorist Alan Lomax — famously and eloquently in Louis Peter Grijp and Herman Roodenburg's Dutch-language book Blues en Balladen: Alan Lomax en Ate Doornbosch, twee muzikale veldwerkers (Blues and Ballads: Alan Lomax and Ate Doornbosch, Two Music Fieldworkers), a 2005 imprint of the Amsterdam University Press.

Ate Doornbosch took the work of fellow Dutch ethnomusicologists forward and to heart, notably Jaap Kunst (1891-1960) and arguably Will Scheepers (1913-1990). Between 1957 and 1993 — when he "retired" — he broadcast some 1.316 radio programs, initially on the socialist VARA station and from 1968 on the Dutch Radio Union. The series was transformative in ways that few folk music broadcasts might ever hope to match. Doornbosch's broadcasts det the top minds of the Dutch folk revival — think Wolverlei and Fungus — and the public.

Doornbosch's program, Onder de groene linde (Under the Green Linden [tree]), lent its title to one of the greatest collections of narrative folk and ballad songs ever released anywhere. The nine-CD and one-DVD boxed set Onder de groene linde (Music & Words (2008) is a motherlode of



Swansongs =

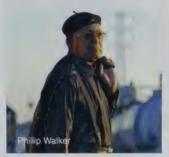
narrative, unaccompanied song. It comes in a bilingual Dutch-English package. Ate Doornbosch was born on Jan. 1, 1926, in the village of Nuis, near Marum, in the Dutch province of Groningen. He died on July 23, 2010, at home in Schiedam in the province of Zuid-Holland.

Phillip Walker 1937-2010

Blues guitarist Phillip Walker died of apparent heart failure July 22, in Palm Springs, CA. He was 73, writes Roddy Campbell. A second cousin to Clarence (Gatemouth) Brown, Walker was born in Welsh, LA, on Feb. 11, 1937, the seventh of 12 children. He first recorded with Roscoe Gordon in 1952. The following year Clifton Chenier hired Walker as his guitarist, with whom he recorded on the Specialty, Chess and Argo labels.

After relocating to Los Angeles in 1959, Walker recorded his first track—the storming *Hello My Darling*—as a bandleader for Elko Records. His first full-length album

didn't appear until 1973's *The Bottom* of the Top for Hugh Hefner's short-lived Playboy label. Over the next three decades, Walker's musical career continued to pick up steam with numerous recording projects for HighTone, Black Top, Rounder, JSP and Alligator Records. An intelligent, tasteful and unostentatious guitarist, Walker worked with such diverse artists as Curtis Mayfield and Little Richard. His last album, 2007's *Going Back Home*, was voted Album of the Year by the critics at *Living Blues* magazine.



Penguin Eggs also notes other passings in brief: Bob Norman, who edited Sing Out! magazine from 1970 to 1977, died on Sunday, May 4, after a long battle with prostate cancer.

Calvin (Fuzz) Jones, best known for his bass playing in Muddy Waters's band throughout the '70s, died Aug, 9 in Greenwood, MS, aged 84. Jones had previously worked with Howlin' Wolf, Elmore James and Little Walter.

Trail-blazing conjunto accordionist Steve (Esteban) Jordan died Aug. 13 in San Antonio, TX. Jordan tuned his accordions beyond the standard three-key range and perfected a double echoplex effect, which boosted the popularity of conjunto music. *The New York Times* called him the "invisible genius of Texas accordion music".

Tuli Kupferberg, the poet, singer and co-founder of New York agit, folk-rock band The Fugs, died July 12 in Manhattan. He was 86.

Win Great Big Sea's Safe Upon the Shore



With Safe Upon The Shore, Great Big Sea have recorded, arguably, their strongest disc in almost a decade. Recorded in New Orleans and St. John's, it features co-writes with the likes of actor Russell Crowe and veteran rocker Randy Bachman. Produced in part by Los Lobos's Steve Berlin, it features such outstanding guest musicians as Sonny Landreth on slide guitar and J.P. Cormier on a variety of acoustic instruments.

And the nice people at Warner Bros Music Canada have very kindly provided us with six copies. To win one, you need to answer the following questions correctly and email your answers to penguineggs@shaw.ca. Put Great Big Sea in the subject line. And please don't forget to include a postal mailing address and a proper contact name in order for us to forward your disc. Failure to do so will result in disqualification. Good luck.

- Q 1. On the band's rousing song *General Taylor*, what was the chain made of that lowered him into the grave?
- Q 2. Which member of Great Big Sea appeared in this past summer's block-buster *Robin Hood*?
- Q 3. Safe Upon The Shore features a song once covered by Led Zeppelin—name it.

Answers to Aveit Brothers and Gogol Bordello dises are: Q1: Everything is Illuminated Q2: Nemo or Back Porch Project. And the winners are: Al Valente, Edmonton, AB: Mary Taylor, Halifax, NS; William Deas, Inverness, NS; Harriett Glass, Victoria, BC: Bill Rankin, Winnipeg, MB; Scott Larsen, Powell, WY; Terry Young, Kingston, ON; Elma Coyle, Edmonton, AB, Clare O Grady, St John's, NL, Lynique Burnet, Montreal, QC Lisa Snider, Kamloops, BC; Zach Johnson, New York, NY;



J.R. Shore

For J.R. Shore, truth isn't just stranger than fiction, it's better.

It's a better well to draw from for his sharp songwriting skills to create and populate the roots-rock ramblings heard on his pair of acclaimed discs, 2008's An Impeccable Shine and this year's Talkin' On a Bus.

The emerging Alberta artist is, he admits, always on the lookout for something, someone, some story he can wrap in sepia tones and give melodic shoes in which to shuffle around the room. Well, almost always.

"This is sort of a hip little place to be," says Shore, looking around the Calgary coffee house that he chose as a meeting spot. "And as much as the people are probably interesting, I'm looking for," he pauses, "darker. I want the stuff that's really going to get you...

"I want to write about interesting things and interesting people. I'm not going to tell you about how much I love my dog, or how much my wife means to me—those kinds of songs and writers don't appeal to me...

"I want to find interesting stories and I want to be able to tell them from my own perspective."

To that end, Shore finds his finest lyrical

sparks less in observing the world directly in front of him and more in the literary worlds of newspapers and books, and the lore of the land.

Take Talkin' On a Bus, for example, which features the travails of and tributes to such real-life characters as Frank (Lefty) Rosenthal (the gambling figure Robert De Niro's character was based on in the Martin Scorsese film Casino), Country Music Hall of Famer and "sad poet" Don Gibson, as well as a song about the contentious relationship between late New York Yankees legends George Steinbrenner and Billy Martin, the latter being just one of many Shore tunes about the great American pastime.

Musically, the stories are told with just as much inspiration from our southern neighbours, taking their sonic cues from artists such as Tom Waits, Jim Croce, Dwight Yoakam and Townes van Zandt. The resulting sound finds the keyboardist and his band swinging wildly around the Americana spectrum—from honky tonk to Dixieland to piano ballads to straight-up slick country numbers.

All of which leads to many of his compatriots questioning whether or not there might be a little blue blood mixed in with the red and white cells coursing through his northern veins. "A lot of people wonder when they see me (play) if I'm American, because I have a lot of material that comes from the southern United States," Shore says. "There are a lot of reasons for that: I lived (in Nashville) for a couple of years and I'm also deeply fascinated with that area because of what it grew, musically. That's where the roots of American music are. From a musical perspective, that has really affected me. And from a cultural and historical perspective, there are also amazing stories to tell from down there. Warts and all. And I like warts."

Lest protectionism begin to rise inside the breast of the most patriotic of music lovers, Shore is quick to point out that for two of the past four years he's taken best song in the songs about Canada or Alberta categories in an annual songwriting contest sponsored by the Calgary Folk Music Festival, this year's being about Cree legend Chief Poundmaker.

And if your beaver fever's still running high, it should calm you to know the true-life tome in which Shore is currently seeking inspiration. "I'm reading the story of Lord Stanley," the musician laughs. "That'swhat's on the night table right now."

- By Mike Bell

Ghostkeeper

It is a conversation he's had before, a clarification he's made often.

But, on this day, Shane Ghostkeeper strongly feels the need to set the record straight for one final time.

Ghostkeeper is the name of a band and not—he repeats—a one-man show.

The reason that it's on his mind is because he's just finished a suitably busy summer, which had him booked at a number of folk festivals across Canada, performing with his three bandmates as well as, he says despondently, a solo act.

"Ah, shit," Ghostkeeper says at the memory of going it alone. "It's not proper, it's not the idea, you know?

"I write the songs with my band in mind and all the songs end up being arranged, in the end, with everyone's input. The last thing I want is anyone to think that it's a solo effort, especially when the other three have put in so much effort and so much commitment into the project—it's pretty embarrassing to have people think it's a solo thing."

The northern Alberta-born artist laments that some who came out to see Ghostkeeper were disappointed with the stripped-down-to-nakedness of the songs featured on 2008's Children of the Great Northern Muskeg and 2010's eponymous release.

Or worse, some thought perhaps he'd split with guitarist Jay Crocker, bassist Scott Munro and, of course, Shane's partner and often muse drummer Sarah Houle.

Ghostkeeper shudders at the thought.

"It's where I'm happiest," he says of the configuration, which is now firmly and rightfully entrenched in the Calgary music scene.

"I've got Sarah and our chemistry to work with. That's where all of the songs are born, with Sarah and me, and our dynamic, and our romance, and our relationship. And then the boys get onboard from there. So I'm definitely in my element."

Listening to the band's current release, you'd be hard pressed to argue the point.

The album is filled with sensationally quirky and powerfully raw folk/pop/blues ballads informed by his native heritage and upbringing, which insinuates itself nicely into the music and the material.

Adding to the eccentric and utterly unique sound and cohesive band feel of the effort is the fact it was produced by Crocker and Munro, who recorded it at various locations around Calgary with acoustics in mind, such as a marble staircase in a downtown building.

Ghostkeeper describes the musical bonding excursions as "mobile escapades in certain warehouses and parkades with a battery-powered four-track cassette recorder from the '80s and it ended up turning out amazing. We take a lot of risks and adventures when we make our records."

And, again, enough people are taking notice that there'd be concern over a Ghost-keeper split. Critically, the latest disc was lauded all across Canada, even earning it a spot on this year's Polaris Prize long list—a fact that Shane finds more artistically satisfying than commercially noteworthy.

"It's good to know that the critics and journalists are interested, or at least entertained, and encouraging our artistic evolution, is how it feels like to me," he says. "I think that's one thing people are going to have to get used to with us, is that we're not looking to find our one true voice or any cliched perspective like that. I think



we're always going to be searching for something new and searching for constant evolution. So every album's going to be something different."

As for that next album, Ghostkeeper plan on heading back into—and out of—the studio in November to record the followup.

In the meantime, if you happen to see him performing a solo show, relax, it just means he's testing out new material for that disc.

Ghostkeeper is and always will be a band. Or hadn't we established that yet?

- By Mike Bell

Matthew Byrne

Atthew Byrne can't remember a time when he wasn't surrounded by traditional music.

"Mom tells me that I was singing before I was talking; humming in my cradle when I was little. Our house was always a hotbed of jams and song sessions. Mom and dad were always up for a party. I was never shushed off to bed, we were always allowed to stay up with the grown-ups."

Matthew's parents are Joe Byrne and Linda Slade, two well known traditional singers from Placentia Bay on Newfoundland's southeast coast. Joe, his brother Pat Byrne and musician Baxter Wareham recorded an

album named *Towards The Sunset* in 1983. A collection of mostly original songs in the traditional style, it is considered by many to be one of the most influential Newfoundland recordings of all time.

With that kind of family history, it is not surprising that Matthew is eager to establish a musical legacy of his own. Gigging since his early teens, he is a seasoned performer at the ripe old age of 25. Armed with great guitar chops and a heartfelt voice, he released his debut CD, entitled Ballads, in May of this year. Ballads is a collection of 10 songs from both traditional and contemporary sources.

"The songs didn't all have to have something in common or be defined by being part of an era or style. I just decided to pick 10 songs that I love to sing and record those. There is a strong Newfoundland bent, but there was no commitment to say it would only be songs from here."

Some of the songs were recorded as they were learned, unaccompanied. Other numbers benefitted from a cast of terrific musicians, including folk veteran Fergus O'Byrne, Fred Jorgensen of The Navigators, and Matthew's brother, Allan. A collaboration with trad powerhouse The Dardanelles brought Matthew's studio arrangements to life during this summer's

The Big Buzz =



touring season. The two acts combined forces to perform at folk festivals across Canada and Newfoundland this year, enjoying both an enthusiastic audience response and vigorous CD sales.

"We played at the Winnipeg Folk Festival and I didn't know what to expect. I had never sung to non-Newfoundland audiences before. It was great to see it go over so well."

In a province where many traditional bands make their mark playing high-energy instrumentals and crowd-pleasing ditties, Matthew's musical approach is a pronounced departure from the prevailing we'll-rant-and-we'll-roar style of folk music often embraced by local bands.

"It's the farthest thing from downtown on a Friday night. What I do is fairly mellow and in that sense it's a bit of a risk."

Like many folkies, Matthew currently has a day job with the Department of Long Distance Education at Memorial University. He also has a master's degree in history and Newfoundland studies, academic disciplines that are certainly compatible with his artistic interests. Articulate and knowledgeable about his musical heritage, he is an old soul, adding a resonant, new voice to Newfoundland's trad community.

- By Jean Hewson

Ashley Condon

Alifax-based Ashley Condon is an old soul. The Prince Edward Island transplant returned to the Maritimes after a brief stint in Ontario, only to reignite her heart and regain her footing in Nova Scotia. Her debut album. Come In From The Cold, could warm any weary soul.

"A lot of the songs were written during the colder months when I'd be cosied up in my room with a cup of tea and my slip-



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pers," says Condon. "The songs map out the journey of my 20s, which was both a dark and exciting transition into womanhood.

"I was really getting to know who I was and learning how to be gentle with myself. I was connecting with my heart's desire to be an artist and expose my vulnerability through song. Come In From The Cold is an invitation."

With a combination of folk and country, Condon is truly coming into her own. The Neighbours Ain't Home is a sexy saunter for an evening in bed with a lover, the kind of night where you can reach and claw at the moon without anyone eavesdropping. She muses about love at first sight on Baby Brown Eyes, although it's A New Heart that should tug at every Maritimer who longs for sun and a change of heart.

"People on the East Coast seem to move slower and are really friendly. I remember when I'd be flying from Toronto to PEI, I'd be at Pearson International Airport and people would be whizzing by me like racecars and would take their seats on the plane with efficiency and purpose, not bothering anyone or making eye contact."

Inspired by Hank Williams, John Prine, her grandfather and Gillian Welch, Condon draws mostly on her rich family background on the red sands of Prince Edward Island.

"I lived in the country with my mom, who was a fisherwoman. She owned a big green truck and knew every back road like the back of her hand. The way of life was unique in that you were in service of the sea; at the mercy of its ebbs and flows."

Anyone who has lived surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean knows the mercilessness of life by the sea. It's inherent that eventually, no matter how far you roam; there will be a time in everyone's life to come home. Condon couldn't ignore the pull.

"What I loved about my location was that I could walk back to Condon's shore behind my house and be there for hours without seeing one person. There is a sense of vastness and mystery when I stand by the ocean, and it is that feeling that I try to re-create when I write songs. I never knew how important growing up on Prince Edward Island was to me until I moved away and started writing music that, in essence, was calling me back home."

- By Shannon Webb-Campbell



Tambura Rasa

The music of Ivan Tucakov is shaped by roots and travels. The guitarist and leader of Vancouver quintet Tambura Rasa was born in Serbia, spent eight years in southcentral Turkey, and moved back to Belgrade where he played in a teenage rock band.

He came to Canada after high school to join his brother and study and while an undergrad he traded his electric axe for a nylon-stringed acoustic model, and picked up elements of bluegrass and Indian music, among a range of other styles.

"I also went to Spain to learn right-hand techniques, and ended up learning a bunch of flamenco styles. From there I thought about all the different music I'd been exposed to throughout my life."

Tucakov created Tambura Rasa in 2004 to play a unique West Coast blend of Balkan, Middle Eastern, Indian and Latin roots music styles. The moniker is a pun on the Latin tabula rasa—which Tucakov translates as "blank slate"—as well as the tambura, a popular Serbian stringed instrument.

"For me, it relates to the cultural influences of the places we've lived in and acknowledges that the people we connect with will in some way affect the way we're going to be. At the time, I really wanted to explore that concept, even outside of music."

Tambura Rasa put out Sunrise on a New World in 2004 and followed up in 2006 with Viaje. The band soon replaced Indian tablas with drum kit and Latin percussion to give it more appeal for dancers. The cur-

rent lineup has been together for the past three years. It features Tucakov, percussion maestro Pepe Danza, kit drummer Trevor Grant, bassist John Bews and violinist Michael Fraser.

"It took a while to get a sense of where to take it. A violin was always going to be there—Michael played Gypsy swing and his training was by ear so he was very good at improvising and working around what I was doing on guitar. We've become adept at weaving on top of whatever the others are doing. Once that was established, the music led itself."

The current formation released *Ka-manala* in 2008 and, according to Tucakov, is currently hitting its stride, with enough material for a new album this fall.

"We'd like to do it just by walking into the studio and record things just as we sound now—we're just back from a tour of Central Canada playing in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and London, and we're feeling really well-settled as a group. I can't wait to get back on the road."

To add extra colour to its shows, Tambura Rasa works with movement artists, and is currently performing with flamenco dancer Karen Pitkeithly and sambista Andrea Monteiro.

"I'm in the process of exploring different kinds of dances. I've discovered that samba works really well for us, also Russian Gypsy dance. There are so many traditions that meet here, and so many interpretations and combinations that are possible."

- By Tony Montague



Mirror Images

Looking Glass, the striking debut disc from Fay Hield, may scare small children with its odd and gory big ballads but Colin Irwin stands steadfast as he notes the emergence of a unique traditional singer.

ast year, the venerable Topic Records celebrated its 70th birthday amid much gong-banging and an unfamiliar blaze of publicity, in which it was hailed not only as the guardian of British folk music but as the world's oldest ongoing independent label. This year, boss man Tony Engle announced two further surprises: he'd signed the first new artist to the label for more than a decade—and it was somebody who wasn't called Carthy or Waterson.

In fact, the new addition to the Topic family turned out to be Fay Hield, an uncompromising young traditional performer from Yorkshire who Engle describes, with formidable vigour, as a "proper singer".

"He said that?" laughs a delighted Fay, pouring tea backstage in an extraordinarily relaxed fashion for somebody who was about to showcase her new trio (with Rob Harbron of English Acoustic Collective and Bellowhead's Sam Sweeney) at one of the U.K.'s most influential and discerning annual events, Devon's Sidmouth Folk Week. The previous night she'd had an enticing taste of the festival atmosphere, singing backup vocals with Martin Simpson's trailblazing big band.

And when, with the tea drunk, it was her turn to take centre stage with the Fay Hield Trio, she didn't disappoint, impressing the Sidmouth cognoscenti with her confident, refreshingly unaffected delivery of a series of dark, challenging and unusual traditional songs. No, they decided, Tony Engle hadn't lost leave of his senses, as they trotted off to grab a copy of her bright, shiny debut album, Looking Glass.

Not that she's appeared from nowhere. Hailing from the gorgeous village of Haworth in the evocative North Yorkshire moors—Brontë Sisters country—she's long been consumed by traditional song. Her mother was a morris dancer and her dad, who makes flamenco guitars, was on the fringes of the folk world. Fay's introduction came at the Bacca Pipes Folk Club in Keighley at the time it was frequented by some of the scene's major figures, including Peter Bellamy, Steve Tilston and Maggie Boyle (for whom she became a nanny,

attending various festivals with Tilston and Boyle.)

Another Keighley regular was Damien Barber, with whom she sang for a while before heading for Newcastle, where she took the traditional music degree course. There she found herself sharing accommodation with Becky Stockwell, Gillian Tolfrey and Bryony Griffith (who later joined Damien Barber in the Demon Barbers) and in no time at all the four of them were singing down the pub together with such gusto they gradually evolved into the highly rated unaccompanied group the Witches of Elswick.

"It happened in Newcastle at the same time I was doing the degree but we were all quite adamant we weren't a group who'd come out of the course. We came out of cider, mainly. Cider and late-night pub sessions..."

Whatever it came out of, it worked. The Witches went on to make two albums. *Out of Bed* (2003) and *Hell's Belles* (2005), and stayed together for more than four years playing numerous gigs before life took over. You know, jobs, marriage and kids and stuff like that.

In Fay's case, this process was accelerated eight years ago by a fateful union at Sidmouth Festival with one Jon Boden who, with his partner in crime John Spiers, was then a rampaging new young gun of Brit folk and is now front man with Bellowhead, folk's biggest band (in more ways than one) while juggling parallel careers with his other band, Remnant Kings, an ongoing duo with Spiers, and numerous other intriguing offshoot projects. Boden and Hield, who have also played the odd duo gig together, now have two small children and are involved with the running of two Yorkshire folk clubs. So with Fav now starting to gig on a regular basis, too, the carnage on the kitchen calendar doesn't bear thinking about.

On top of all this, Fay has been working on a thesis for her PhD—"Contemporary English Folk Singing and the Creation of Community"—so adding to the workload by making an album and launching a solo career wasn't a pressing priority.

"Jon bullied me into doing it," she says, by way of explanation. "I'd always wanted to make a solo record and Jon said, 'Let's just book a studio and do it'."

The fact that she was expecting her sec-

ond child at the time while also writing her PhD thesis didn't faze him one little bit. Or, as it transpired, Fay either, as she searched deeply for suitably arresting material.

While the title track is a relatively straightforward version of one of Peter Bellamy's Kipling poems set to music, there's plenty of other stuff that will raise eyebrows, and possibly scare the children. One of the oddest songs, Mad Family, comes from the Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes and is set to a Jon Boden tune. Other fearsome tales include the gory Two Brothers and a subtle rewriting of the epic ballad Banks of the Nile.

"I've got loads of songs I love to sing at sessions and singarounds but I felt quite strongly that if I was going to make an album it should include things that were somehow different and special. So I've gone for more obscure songs from collections I've never heard of before or little-known versions of things. Nursery rhymes are often very dark. I have a really sinister one for the next album that's all about Napoleon Bonaparte eating children... I'm a big ballad girl. I love the gory songs. There's a couple that got dropped off this album because they were a bit over the edge, but I might go back to them. Like Child Owlet. That's one of my favourites. even if no one else likes it."

One of the most notable elements of Hield's striking album is that while she says her music is inspired by "the iconic LPs of the '70s and '80s", she doesn't sound like anyone else.

"I think maybe my idea of the iconic LPs are very different to other people's," she says, laughing. "I haven't listened to June Tabor or Maddy Prior or Sandy Denny. That whole folk-rock thing totally passed me by, I don't understand it a bit. My singers were Annie Briggs, Maggie Boyle and Steve Tilston, Peter Bellamy... I was influenced by people who were actually around me rather than through listening to the big commercial albums."

Did you only listen to folk music? "Mostly folk music, yes. I'm not a big muso. I'm a Cher fan. And Karen Carpenter. And my favourite album of all time is Dolly Parton's *The Grass is Blue*. She's an amazing singer. Like Cher and Karen Carpenter. Nothing to do with genre, they're just brilliant singers. I'm not a big technique singer.

I still think of myself primarily as an unaccompanied singer. I just sing how I sing."

Once she'd finished recording *Looking Glass*, Fay sent it to Topic more in hope than expectation and nobody was more stunned when Tony Engle called to say he was coming to Sheffield to discuss a deal. Jon Boden had, after all, once been turned down by Topic.

"Yeah, I keep rubbing that in," she says. "I'm really chuffed. I'm expecting comments about me having a raw and rough voice and if you're not on a decent label that can very easily be translated as poor singing. But it's natural and I see it as a strength. I'm very pleased Tony saw that as well. So if all the reviews are shocking I don't mind so much because at least one person liked it."

Time Passages

Bernard Simard literally researched thousands of traditional songs for his new album, Au fil du temps. Yves Bernard discovers a wonderful disc that includes tales of gingerbread houses and love songs that create more carnage than wolves.

ver the past three decades,
Bernard Simard has appeared
in no fewer than 20 traditional
music groups. He has one of Quebec's most

beautiful voices, a pure voice that allows each word to ring out clearly. He is also a chansonneur, following in the steps of all those who have, throughout the years, brought to light the original texts to traditional songs. He has recently released *Au fil du temps*, a superb second solo album that introduces listeners to new sounds such as swing, Dixieland, Cajun and even mariachi music.

Unlike his first album, which featured him singing alone with his guitar, this one finds Simard accompanied by a quintet. "I guess that after playing solo for a few years, I felt a push to go towards the other extreme." he explains.

And the musicians are all excellent. Violinist André Brunet, who has played with not only La Bottine Souriante but also the Celtic Fiddle Festival and De Temps Antan, taps both feet and snare along to his fiery fiddle, while Olivier Demers, the fiddler known for his collaborations with Le Vent du Nord, indulges in experimentation with discreet textures on the electric guitar.

Then there is upright bassist François Marion, who diversifies the musical palette by picking his strings and sliding his bow, while Jean Boutin takes off on Dixieland clarinet solos or on mariachi-flavoured trumpet stylings. José-Maria Gianelli completes the group and brings to it a delicate Latin touch. Together, these artists can just as easily go down the paths of old-time music, Gypsy jazz or old swing.



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And what are the two common factors to this repertoire? First is Bernard's strong vocal personality that can take on all shades and colours, and second is the fact that the songs all result from the collecting he did at the Laval University Archives, where thousands of traditional songs are housed.

"I try to scan the entire archives. I pick out the best ones and see if a theme develops from them. For the production of the latest album, my research scaled around 6,000 songs. I recorded about 400 of them and, in the end, retained a hundred or so. After working them out with the guitar, I ended up keeping 13."

Why does he take such great interest in these archives? "They allow me to find original material and new song texts," he answers. "Otherwise, I would have to find songs that were passed down from person. I do not come from a family of traditional musicians, and the lyrics are what speak to me the most."

In this matter, one of his greatest influences remains the late Yves Albert, the singing folklorist who also introduced the public to songs from the archives, arranging them with brass well before La Bottine.

"There are affinities between mine and Yves Albert's repertoires. Ever since I have taken an interest in traditional music, I have always found pieces of his that suit me quite well. Lac à Beauce, which I sang with La Bottine, as well as many other numbers, are all songs that I learned from him. I think that our styles are similar, and we share the same desire to choose beautiful melodies and interesting lyrics."

This is particularly true on Au fil du Temps: love songs of both the faithful and unfaithful are mixed with humorous songs featuring odd characters and surreal situations. It is a world in which the houses are made of gingerbread, sailors paddle along in floating canoes and the elderly creep around like old seadogs. Then there are the drinking songs and the stories in which love causes more carnage than a pack of wolves. In one particular song, the ship's captain throws himself overboard in order to save his beloved.

"The sea and collective memory are of a similar nature. One is composed of billions of tiny drops and the other of countless experiences. If all of humankind's recollections were to rain down on a single spot, an

immense ocean of sailing memories would be born out of the shower," Bernard poetically writes in the album's liner notes.

However, he has not always been so interested in tradition. As an adolescent, he bathed in the waters of hard and progressive rock, listening to Black Sabbath, Genesis, King Crimson and Pink Floyd. At the age of 17, he began singing in bars, taking his inspiration from not only the likes of Cat Stevens but also from such great Quebecois songwriters as Félix Leclerc, Claude Dubois and Sylvain Lelièvre.

And then, in the late 1970s, the spark went off. He was called in to replace the guitarist for La Baratte à Beurre and suddenly found himself discovering a new world. "I caught the bug. Before that, I didn't really like traditional music that much because I hadn't really listened to it," he tells us.

From that time on, Bernard would never again leave the traditional music scene. After his time with La Baratte à Beurre, he played with Matante Alys and, from 1983 to 1987. La Bottine Souriante. He then joined Manigance, a group that interpreted songs from the Joliette and Quebec City regions, before leaving for Britanny, where he lived from 1992 until 2001. During this time, he sang songs from the Quebecois repertoire with the group Gwazigan, sea shanties with the group Cabestan, and

songs from Brittany with Matawin. He even delved into rock-tinged Irish music with the group Nuked.

When he returned to Quebec's Lanaudiere region, he collaborated with Le Vent du Nord before joining the ranks of Trio à Quatre. He also participated in the *Que le yable les emporte!!!* project with Constantinople. In total, he has collaborated on the recording of more than 40 albums. His latest offering has been anxiously awaited and, once again, he hasn't let us down.

Young At Heart

Like their hero Neil Young, Dala appear to have struck a chord south of the border. David McPherson provides a progress report on the duo's appearances at such hooleys as the Newport Folk Festival.

ala consist of Amanda Walther and Sheila Carabine. And Ms. Walther and Ms. Carabine started 2010 with the news that National Public Radio (NPR) in the U.S. had named *Horses* one of the Top 10 folk songs of 2009. Here's a snippet of how NPR described it:

"Imagine a little boy who's unable to go outside. Instead, he constantly stands at the window and watches horses in a pasture





across the street as they playfully run as fast as they can. He imagines he is one of them. This touching song is not only based on a true story, but it's also beautifully sung."

I catch up with Sheila Carabine just before the pair leave Toronto to play their first ever string of shows in the U.K. She says the last year has been a whirlwind of excitement.

"We just started going down to the United States in 2009 and were immediately embraced by the roots community down there. To get a shout out to our song *Horses* was amazing ... that's how we started 2010 off. We were on Cloud 9 and we've been touring nonstop throughout the year, so Cloud 9 has jet wings!"

Dala (the duo's name was formed by combining the two last letters of each of their names) started singing and writing together eight years ago in high school.

Their debut record, Everyone is Someone, was released in June 2009. Besides the nod from NPR, the record earned them their fifth Canadian Folk Music Award nomination, a Toronto Independent Music Award for Best Folk Group, and was touted by The Irish Post as the Album of the Year.

Influenced by Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan and the Beatles, Dala have performed at some of the top folk festivals in the U.S., including the New Orleans Jazz Festival, California's Strawberry Festival and the Newport Folk Festival.

"It can be a bit daunting to head down there with your little box of songs, but we've just been embraced immediately by U.S. audiences. We've had a lot of fortune to play at some prominent festivals that got us some big exposure early on."

They made their Canadian folk festival debut at Mariposa. "That got our feet in the door in the folk community. They are such a loyal community. Folk audiences are the best listening audiences. It's a performer's dream to have a room full of people with their ears and eyes wide open."

A big break for Dala came in 2009 when they were invited to play at the 50th anniversary of the Newport Folk Festival. It turned out to be even more than they had expected.

"It's become an exciting part of our musical journey. We played at 11 a.m. on the Sunday on one of the smaller stages and had a great turnout. By the end of the set, the tent was full and there was such energy in the air that we were invited to do



a 'tweener' on the main stage in between Arlo Guthrie and Neko Case. Obviously you don't say no to that.

"We went up and played Levi Blues for about 10,000 people. It is such a beautiful spot where Newport is held, you are right on the water. You feel like it is another time. Big white yachts pulling up with American flags blowing in the wind, it felt like the Kennedy era. That was probably the most exciting moment of my life."

Besides constantly touring, this year Dala have filmed several videos and released a DVD and companion live disc of a PBS special they did with fellow Canadians The Good Lovelies and Oh Susanna called *Girls from the North Country*.

"We do our songs, plus some covers of great Canadian songs. We've sung Both Sides Now for a few years and it's definitely one of those songs that there's a reason it's a classic. Every time I sing it, I get something new out of it. We also sing Dylan's Girl from the North Country. Every Bob Dylan song I've ever sung, the words just melt in your mouth ... it's amazing."

Carabine says she also loves covering Neil Young. They've sung everything from *Down By the River* to *Ohio*. Surprisingly, she has yet to see the Canadian legend. "We love to get our Neil on. He's the greatest. He could go out there and play xylophone and I would still pay to see him."

More recently, the pair have written about five new songs, which Carabine says is a good number for them as the songwriting process can often be painstakingly slow.

"We just mull over our ideas for a while and then the songs just sort of blossom. We find it difficult to write while we are touring, so it's really the spaces in between when songs have a chance to come to life."

Dala has a small window of spare time this fall before heading to California for their first official tour of a state with a rich folk tradition. They then return to play a few Canadian dates and close out the year with two shows in December at Hugh's Room in Toronto, which Carabine says is one of their favourite venues to play.

"We are recording our next studio album in June 2011. We have enough material and are excited about that. We will record in Toronto with Michael Jack, the same engineer from our last record."



Rebel Rebel

Ali Farka Toure and Jimi Hendrix inspired Bassekou Kouyate's trail-blazing approach to the ngoni, an ancient relative of the banjo. Tony Montague applauds Kouyate's reinvention of traditional African music.

ali's Bassekou Kouyate revitalizes Africa's music from within. For decades the core of most bands on the continent has included electric bass, guitar, and drum kit. But Kouyate may be turning that around. His outfit, Ngoni Ba, comprises only traditional Malian percussion and four different-size ngonis, the ancestor and cousin of the banjos, equipped with pickups.

"We Africans have had our own instruments for a very long time," says Kouyate, interviewed at the Vancouver Folk Music Festival in July. "The ngoni dates from before the birth of Christ and its music was intended for kings, religious teachers, or great warriors in Mali. It was only played by griots [a caste of storytellers, praise singers, and musicians].

"I was born a griot, my father was a griot, so were my grandfather and great-grandfather. I come from a village called Garana in the region of Ségu. My mother, Yagaré Damba, was a praise singer and my father, Mustapha, taught me the ngoni when I was 11. He was my only teacher. Like my family I play Bamana music, but I also play music of the Manding and Fula, and all of the different peoples of Mali."

In these traditions the ngoni players were always seated. As a young musician in Bamako, Mali's capital, in the mid '80s Kouyate was the first one to stand up to perform—with a strap tied to the paddle-shaped ngoni and slung over his shoulder like a guitar. It sparked a controversy among the purists, but Kouyate was on his way to transforming the ngoni, and the critics took note of the brilliant young player.

For many years he performed around the world and recorded in the trio of the great Malian kora player Toumani Diabate with Keletigui Diabate. He came up with the idea of forming an ensemble made up of ngonis of different sizes—and with extra strings.

"A lot of people back home said, 'You're nuts, it won't work'," says the genial Kouyate, speaking in French. "But it has, and already there are lots of people doing it—my own kids even have their own band, Ngoni Ba Junior."

The encouragement and advice of an ailing colossus of African music proved decisive for Kouyate. The late Ali Farka Toure



(1939-2006), father of the "desert blues", clearly saw the enormous potential of what Kouyate was doing for the music of their homeland.

"I worked with Ali on Savane," he says, recalling the guitarist's 2006 album, recorded when his health was failing. "He wanted to help me. He used to say, 'You have to launch your own career now.' There were plenty of people who asked me to play on their albums—Baaba Maal, Youssou N'Dour, Taj Mahal.

"Then everything happened, really. One day Nick Gold [Savane's English producer] called me to say that Ali was in the studio and wanted to do something with me. When I got there the next day I saw Ali dancing, and he welcomed me warmly. I played on all the tracks, and he gave me lots of space, so people could really hear what I can do with the ngoni. It's rare for someone like that to give a boost to a younger musician."

The exposure that Savane gave Kouyate enabled him to form his band with his wife, Ami Sacko, as lead singer and a quartet of ngonis, from the new bass to the traditional soprano that the master himself wields.

"It was hard at first to get the sound right with the bass instrument. It caused too much feedback in the amplifiers and in the end I had to buy five kilos of cotton to stuff inside the body!"

The band's 2006 debut disc, Segu Blue, helmed by BBC musicologist Lucy Duran and mixed by Jerry Boys, was a big hit in Europe. I Speak Fula followed in 2009, produced by the same team, who bring a wealth of knowledge about Malian music. The balance is perfect, and the instruments weave a bright and contemporary fabric from ancient threads.

The album hits the ground running

with the opening title cut, a polyrhythmic mesh irresistible for the feet. Other high-lights include *Bambugu Blues*, a groove so deep you may never crawl out, the funky and soulful *Falani*, and the propulsive, shuffling *Musow—For Our Women*. The 11 guest artists include Diabaté, hot electric guitarist Vieux Farka Touré, and griot singer Kasse Mady Diabate.

Bela Fleck has also proved a valuable ally, collaborating with Kouyate on the album and documentary film *Throw Down Your Heart* that follows the U.S. five-string banjo ace on a trip to Africa in search of the origins of his instrument.

"Bela came, with [U.S. guitarist] Banning Eyre, to my place, because I've always said that the banjo came from the ngoni. So we played together and he was really happy. We rehearsed together a bit, were filmed and then we went into the studio. He's now started teaching my son the banjo."

Kouyate's virtuoso playing, and some of his arrangements, are a nod to another American master musician.

"I know and love the music of Jimi Hendrix," Kouyate reveals. "That's why I like to play with a wah-wah pedal. Traditional African music has to be revalued and modernized—you can't always play just like your parents and grandparents."

As the sun burned down towards the sea, Ngoni Ba, resplendent in purple and orange robes, mesmerized Vancouver's mainstage audience with their deep grooves and interlacing strings. Kouyate soared over the mesh of ngonis and percussion on a series of exhilarating solo flights, using pedals and effects on occasion to vary the sonic textures.

Bassekou Kouytate and Ngoni Ba take Malian music back to its roots while giving it a bright, contemporary sheen.





Uncles At Large

Les Mononcles play good-time songs and tunes that range from vaudeville to 17th century French chanson. Tony Montague sheds light on this Quebec quintette's mighty musical pedigree.

It's the opening of the Mission Folk Festival on a hot and sultry July day with Mount Baker glowing like a huge snow-cone mirage down valley, and the sun burning down slowly over the hill.

La Grande Veillée, the title of the mainstage evening, which roughly translates as The Big Gathering, is a get-together of five leading tradition-based bands from Quebec. And who better to kick things off than nouveau veterans Les Mononcles, a quartet whose roots twist back to the great revival of the '70s?

Three of these "My-uncles", accordionist Normand Miron, guitarist André Marchand, and multi-instrumentalist Michel Bordeleau, are members of Les Charbonniers de l'Enfer—who are also on the evening's bill of fare along with Galant tu perds ton temps, Réveillons! and Le Vent du Nord.

It's all one big happy family, really. Moustached Mononcle Normand looks blissful as he launches into the comic vaudevillian ditty *Gédéon l'Amateur*, by Quebec legend of the '20s and '30s La Bolduc, singing with gusto a refrain whose words vary each time around, including the magnificently macaronic line "oué oué ho ho ho, you bet mon chou" — pure Montreal early 20th century franglais. The mood is set, and there are big smiles all round.

And that's what Les Mononcles are all about, making good-time acoustic music from La Belle Province, with intelligent arrangements, good harmonies, and nifty instrumental phrases—nothing too experimental according to the genial, bespectacled uncle André, one of the founders of La Bottine Souriante back in 1976.

"It's a group that's concerned, above all, with conveying a certain spirit about things," says Marchand, interviewed later backstage. "It's not laboratory music in any sense, but generally light-hearted, a repertoire in which good humour is at the forefront, and lively rhythms. We make

little incursions into the music of 100 years ago with respect to popular songs of the time—on stage, on disc, and on radio as well as in the oral tradition."

Les Mononcles came together four years ago in response to a request from the fourth uncle and longtime friend, bassist Raynald Dupras.

"His son, a member of Les Cowboys Fringants, one of the leading pop bands in Quebec, right, was doing a series of shows during the Christmas holidays and wanted some trad musicians to play during the breaks.

"So Raynald called me and I called Normand, and he called Michel, and we put together 25 minutes of music and had such a good time doing it that we decided to continue and to create a repertoire of our own."

In 2008 Les Mononcles put out their debut, L'Album Blanche. The band draws on a wealth of material, mainly songs but with a scattering of instrumental sets to vary the textures. There are chansons whose origins go back to western France such as Par derrière chez ma tante, a variant of the well-known 17th century French marching song Auprès de ma blonde.

"In Quebec we must have hundreds of different versions of that song, sung to a range of rhythms and tempos, with highly individualistic choruses. We got our version for Les Mononcles from the late, lamented Gilles Cantin, who was also a co-founder of La Bottine. He learned it from his mother."

Most of Les Mononcles' material is traditional, although the creations of known songwriters form an important part of the band's song bag. They share a love for the spunky compositions of La Bolduc—real name Mary Travers—a great singer and entertainer born in the Gaspé to an Irish father and Ouebecois mother.

"She was a social commentator and she talked about everyday things and people during the years following the Wall Street Crash. She sang with verve and good humour, often using traditional tunes, and she was excessively popular in her time, selling some 75,000 copies of one of her records, which was phenomenal for the time.

"La Bolduc was, in effect, Quebec's first singer-songwriter, a woman who left the kitchen to go on tour with a band. Her songs were intended to make people feel better—

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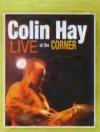
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DLD BLIND DOGS

NHEREVER YET MAY BE

'Old Blind Dogs bring freshness and color to acoustic music steeped in centuries of Scottish. folklore and history." - The Los Angeles Times

don't be discouraged was her message."

The repertoire of Les Mononcles includes work from another legend of Quebecois song of more recent vintage. The band's set at Mission's Grande Veillée included *Berlu* by Gilles Vigneault, who's a good friend of Les Mononcles.

"In the past few years, Les Charbonniers have been very close to Gilles, but even before that he was a very important figure to all of us.

"Gilles doesn't do traditional music, as such, but he's been very much inspired by it. When he talks about the characters in his village, he evokes people who played and sang traditional music. We wanted to adapt one of his songs in the style of Les Mononcles and we found Berlu particularly suitable because it was in a form close to traditional music, and also because of the contemporary theme—it's about a guy who doesn't have any money and who goes to the storekeeper for credit. Here we are again."

Due to Les Charbonniers' commitments, Les Mononcles haven't been able to do much touring and performing, save in Ouebec.

"We'd certainly like to get out West again, and all over, as well as to release another album, that's certainly a goal. We've got no lack of material. Neither Gédéon l'amateur or Berlu are on L'Album Blanche, for a start.

"But right now we're very much concentrated on Les Charbonniers de l'Enfer, who are going to be making a recording in September. That should keep us busy for the next couple of years; after that we'd love to do more with Les Mononcles. We're certainly here to stay."

For the last song of La Grande Veillée, after a typically blistering set by Le Vent du Nord, all the Quebecois bands are onstage together, and André leads the audience through the chorus of the flowery romantic lyric J'aime le vin: "J'aime le vin, l'amour, mes dames, j'aime le vin".

André's inspired gestural language ensures no translation is required. Clustered around mics, the other three uncles and various nephews, nieces and cousins harmonize gorgeously, savouring each syllable to the end. Mission accomplished.

The musicians of Les Mononcles let the good times roll in the old style—nice and easy, you bet, mon chum.



The Singers Club

The wonderfully innovative Abramson Singers are comprised largely of, well, vocalist Leah Abramson. Tim Readman catches up with the woman with a twinkle in her eye and a tongue planted firmly in cheek.

Burnaby, B.C.'s most famous native son is most likely actor Michael J. Fox. Soon however, people may also be very familiar with one of its daughters, by the name of Abramson. Or perhaps that should read some of its daughters.

Meet The Abramson Singers, a choir headed by self-confessed "choir geek" Leah Abramson, and featuring quite a few Leah Abramsons. Allow me to elucidate. Leah is a young singer-songwriter who started recording her own material at 15 years old and quickly developed a love for overdubbing her own voice, stacking up harmony after harmony.

The former member of Dyad [the cover story in P.E. No. 31 – the Ed.] and The Crooked Jades, developed a bout of tendonitis three years ago, which prevented her from playing guitar. So she started experimenting further with multi-tracking her own vocals on an eight-track machine.

As a joke she uploaded the results onto a MySpace page under the name The Abramson Singers.

This led to a lot of positive feedback and she was encouraged to pursue the idea, until it became a whole CD's worth of material. White Whale records latched onto it and made sure the release saw the light of day, still using The Abramson Singers as a moniker for both the artists and the album title.

It garnered favourable attention, including praise from the U.K.'s revered folk music magazine fRoots. As well as using multiple impressions of her own voice, she also recruited a few male singers to back her up on the Bob Wiseman song You Don't Love Me. The result is stunning.

"When do you ever hear a woman backed up by a bunch of male voices? Yeah, it's usually the other way around. It's a shame because it is such a great sound. I wanted it to be arresting."

It would be accurate indeed to describe her music as arresting. Words like original, interesting and innovative also come to mind. But how does she go about describing her own music?

"I hate those kind of questions! I find it hard to talk about my music. I'd say it is an album with lots of harmonies. Sad songs, but with a ray of hope."

While there is indeed sadness, melancholy and disappointment in Abramson's themes and delivery, there is no depression,



no hopelessness and more than a dash of tongue-in-cheek.

Take, for example, her song *Nemesis*, which, she says, is, "Completely ridiculous, with its funny lines—like the one about a person who is so hateful they turn your milk sour."

She wrote it when she found an old keyboard in a jam space, dragged it home, stuck a mic on it, and played a few chords on it, even though it was out of tune. Then she wrote the words in a few minutes and recorded the whole thing. Hardly the angst-driven bedroom poet approach then! It would be so easy to take it at face value, but be warned: if you miss that little twinkle in her eye then you miss the point.

"I just try to write down the things, images and ideas and words that instantly pop into my head. Those aren't necessarily really what I am thinking about specifically ... but once you skim that off the surface, then those are the things that are a lot more interesting, and that's what I try to tap into. I guess most writers do that."

The conversation drifts to that inevitable subject when talking to musicians in Vancouver, i.e. the lack of places to play. "There are not tons of accessible live venues. Not a lot of places to play. Things are very much in pockets. It's hard to see a cohesive scene because it is a bit segregated. People can miss out by staying in one scene. I don't want to diss it but I certainly have my frustrations. People don't support live music as much as in other places. Maybe people just want to go jogging around Stanley Park. I wish there was more willingness to check stuff out—for people to get out of their comfort zone."

She wants to tour more, to other cities in Canada, to head over to the U.K. in search of a different audience, but she is anxious not to be misunderstood or to offend anyone.

"I feel as if I am dissing Vancouver and I don't want to give that impression." She doesn't need to worry. Those of us who are into live music and inhabit Canada's third city understand exactly what she means.

Her multi-layered approach to music making presents its own challenges, including performing the material live. She tried hooking up with a local community choir with some success, but the logistics of rehearsal, organizing everyone, paying them and transporting them made it impractical as a long-term plan. Recently she has been performing with two or three other singers, which she says is, "Working out well."

She also tries to make her live performances fun. "I do joke around a lot live to add an element of ridiculousness, to break it up, to balance out the more melancholic songs. I was doing a workshop with Kerry Latimer from Nathan at the Vancouver Island Music Festival and she said she had given herself a challenge to write a happy song. Maybe I'll do that next!"

She also admits to, "Attempting not to take myself too seriously," and mentions how she sometimes gets a bit self conscious about being seen as only doing darker material but says she is genuinely pulled towards sad songs.

"They are the ones that come naturally. If you look at folk music in general, it is mainly dance music or full-on wailing sadness music. I mean, you have other story songs and stuff in between but it's often either dance or wail—and I guess mine falls in the wail category!"

A Man of Action

Enduring social activist and celebrated songwriter Si Kahn has spent a lifetime on the front lines of community politics. Now set to retire, Glen Herbert has a word with the man who wrote *Aragon Mill*.

i Kahn first learned of the power of song—perhaps like so many in the '60s—from his work in activism.

In his recent book Creative Community Organizing: A guide for rabble rousers, activists, and quiet lovers of justice, he writes about his experience as a skinny, dewy kid from the north on the front lines of the burgeoning civil rights movement.

"At the beginning I was totally naive," he says. "I went south to the southern civil rights movement because all the cool people were going south." There was a lot to impress a person in those days looking for cool stuff, but what impressed Kahn most was the power of song to effect change.

"Singing together can help people prepare to act and take risks ... it can change our hearts, and reinforce our willingness to act in the face of fear and danger." He writes that many of the songs associated with the movement "reached us in a deep, personal way, even though they are, in a sense, a language we do not completely understand, a language that can only be translated by the heart."

"The great political songs connect us across time. Who can stand swaying in a circle with arms linked, singing We Shall Overcome. and not be taken back to the Movement and to the South, whether they were there in person or in spirit, whether they were even yet born?"

When he took up the guitar he sought to use song in the same way: to resolve people to action, to connect them, to reinforce a willingness to face their fears, and to touch them. And in the 40-plus years since then, he hasn't done half bad. He's pressed 16 albums and has written songs that would be recorded by artists ranging from Eddi Reader and Thomas Dolby to Hazel Dickens and U. Utah Philips. (Aragon Mill is perhaps the most covered, and is available on iTunes in nearly 30 different versions.) He's shared stages and CDs with Pete Seeger, he's



lectured on the politics of country music, taught organizing, and songwriting. He's also now completing a musical that will premier in Boston next May.

It's not bad for a career in music that he calls a "hobby that got out of hand." Throughout, he continues to think of his music as a sideline to his true work, that of community organizing. After those early years cutting his teeth during the civil rights years he went on to found Grassroots Leadership in 1980 with the goal then to work to end social and economic oppression and to achieve justice and equality. Among other things, the organization was instrumental in bringing an end to immigrant family detention in the U.S., most notably the T. Don Hutto Detention Centre in Taylor, TX. And when Kahn announced this year that he was retiring, it was his role at the helm of Grassroots Leadership that he was thinking of.

"Somebody once said to me, 'You know, if you had just been a musician, just been a songwriter, think of how many more songs you would have had time to write'. And I say, 'Yeah, but what would they have been about?'. In my songwriting, I've been documenting what these people were like, what their work was like, what their communities were like, what their lives were

like. So, sure, if I hadn't been an organizer I wouldn't have had those stories. And probably if I hadn't been a musician I wouldn't have been as effective as an organizer."

Arguably, some of his best songs are those that were initially written to document something, but also touched on more universal concepts and ideas. *Aragon Mill* is popular because of its sentiment, not for the light it sheds on a specific town at a specific time.

The same is true of Kahn's What You Do with What You've Got. It was written when an editor of Sing Out! couldn't find enough good songs about disability to mark the International Year of Disabled Persons, and Kahn wrote one. In others' hands, perhaps most notably Dick Gaughan's, it becomes an indictment of us all in setting that seems a world away from literal physical impairment.

Nevertheless, he says that "I'm fully aware that, if I'm remembered for anything, it may be for writing *Rubber Blubber Whale*." Were it true (it won't be) he says he wouldn't mind. "As organizers we have to be entertainers. I don't want people to endure the struggle for injustice, I want them to enjoy it. I want music to lift people up. I want it to make them feel better," even when faced with topics and issues that are at times impossibly bleak.

FOLK MUSIC

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His new collection of songs released this summer, *Courage*, comes from the same place and is the latest chapter in a project that spans his career as an organizer. The CD is a collection of songs about people, many of whom he knows through his community work.

"It's really a thank you to everyone from whom I learned what courage means." In the book he writes about his grandfather, his father, community leaders, and people who have endured so much, yet have remained so hopeful. It's perhaps a more-produced offering than most of his others, and the songs benefit from a lush setting and instrumentation provided by banjo whiz Jens Kruger.

"I start [the CD] with a song about a Labrador retriever who thinks he can fly. Because one of the ways we can live this life richly is by attempting the impossible."

Given the richness of his life, of the risks he's taken, it's something he knows about. It's probably safe to say that, retirement or no, we haven't heard the last of Si Kahn.



Natacha Atlas's music bridges continents and cultures. A collaborator with the trailblazing tribal beat masters Trans Global Underground, Atlas also embraces acoustic Arabic classics. Roger Levesque has a word.

estival workshops have inspired some odd musical meetings. At the 2010 Edmonton Folk Music Festival, one unexpected treat came when a session aptly dubbed Big Old Goofy World matched up the southwest Americana band Calexico with Louisiana veteran Zachary Richard and Arabic fusion star Natacha Atlas.

The singer and her group brought a wonderfully exotic, eastern element to the occasion. Aly El Minyawy's hand percussion grooves on darabouka carried across their spell while violinist Samy Bishai bowed dreamy chords. As the show continued, rhythms melded and sleek melodies drifted out over the assembled crowd, players from the other groups soloed over top, and Atlas sent entrancing wordless syllables out on the breeze.

In the end it's no surprise that the chan-



teuse and her crew proved such willing collaborators, or that they inspired the same spirit in others. Virtually from birth—the daughter of an Egyptian father and an English mother, born in a Moroccan suburb of Brussels, Belgium—she has been a child of two cultures and she still divides her time between Britain and the Middle East when she's not at home in the south of France (she can sing and converse in Arabic, English, French and Spanish).

Since her musical career first took off in the early 1990s, Atlas has shown a remarkable penchant for taking the ancient roots of Arabic music and weaving them together with contemporary elements, hip-hop, electronica and more. Now she has created a fascinating collage of sounds and ideas on her latest album, *Mounqaliba* (say moon-KOL-ee-ba, classical Arabic for "in a state of reversal"; her debut on the Six Degrees label in North America).

An hour after the festival session, I sit in a backstage tent with Natacha Atlas and her chief collaborator/musical director/partner Samy Bishai as they debate the pros and cons of translating the music to live performance. Given the sophisticated standards of her studio recordings and their sometimes elaborate arrangements, that's not an

enviable task.

"We've had many discussions about how to best represent an album with a small lineup," she notes. "It's not ideal to try and do an album that has a chamber orchestra on it with only five or six people. It means that Samy has to do a lot of alternate arrangements, an interpretation."

Bishai adds, "It's kind of like writing an album and then rewriting it. There are compromises which ultimately lead to a different slant on the material."

Their obvious confidence in and mutual respect for each other might have something to do with similar origins. Like Atlas, Bishai had an Arabic father and an English mother. Born in Saudi Arabia and raised in Alexandria, this classically trained musician wound up in London about a decade ago. The two met nearly three years ago when he was hired to fill in for an ill violinist in sessions for her last album. Either way, their artistic understanding has made *Mounqaliba* one of the finest episodes of the Atlas discography, written as it was in a couple of weeks and recorded amazingly over just eight days.

What would you expect from a singer whose earliest influences included Fred Astaire and jazz big bands, Hollywood and

Bollywood soundtracks, her mother's taste for Ravi Shankar and Led Zeppelin, and various Arabic pop and classical?

Among Mounqaliba's dozen tunes you'll find traditional Arabic songs like the centuries-old Muwashah Ozkourini re-invented after the style of the Rahbani brothers and Lebanese diva Fairuz; adaptations of French songwriter Francois Hardy and a gorgeous treatment of Nick Drake's River Man with Atlas phrasing the lyric in a loose, jazzy style; and most numbers credited to Atlas/Bishai, sometimes with help from friends like Trans Global Underground's Tim Whelan.

Apart from an instrumental introduction, four short interludes use spoken excerpts from a Peter Joseph film called *The Zeitgeist Addendum* and other sources. Atlas and Bishai saw the film just as they were about to embark on writing the new album in November 2009 and as she explains they were both so impressed by the documentary's perspective on global finance and power that they wanted to reference some of those thoughts in the album *Mounqaliba*.

"The film is about how money was created and how we're enslaved by debt," Atlas says. "I feel that we're stuck living in a world that seems to be imploding in on itself, that there's less evolution going on and more devolution. Even though the technology is out there to do amazing things, progress is being blocked by the monetary system and we're not getting very far at all."

Bishai echoes her appreciation for the



film's message: "It seemed very relevant to a lot of things, to the economic melt-down of the last two years. We didn't want to make preachy, annoying music, but to present our view of things and not suggest we knew all the answers, to ask people to think. Music is a very powerful medium for that and I think people appreciate it more if you don't patronize them by being so liberal."

It's telling that Atlas should be so caught up with a commentary on the politics of global finance. After her parents separated, before she was out of her teens, she and her mother had left Belgium for Britain. She spread her wings further travelling around the Mediterranean and North Africa.

"My uncle's family was there in Egypt and I visited Turkey and Morocco, too. It forced me to practice my Arabic because my pronunciation wasn't very good then. It's an amazing language, one of the most expressive languages in the world for me. So I would visit family and be exposed to the music. It's one thing to hear music on a tape and quite another to see it live."

Back in Europe she was "casting about" for musical opportunities when a fateful introduction to Nation Records got things rolling. With the label's help, she forged a collaboration with Jah Wobble, co-writing a bunch of tunes for his disc Rising Above Bedlam (1991). But more significantly, she met up with Tim Whelan, Hamid Mantu and Nick Page of Trans Global Underground. Before long she was melding her Arabic roots and belly dancing to their pioneering tribal fusion (they still enjoy occasional reunions today). After several albums with TGU they convinced her to make her solo debut, Diaspora (1995).

"I wanted to make music that had all those different elements. I couldn't hear anything that expressed my inclinations, that represented who I was with all the facets of my upbringing."

She's released eight more studio records and two anthologies since, leaning to greater or lesser degrees on acoustic or electric settings, adapting the Arabic tradition of classical song and improvisation to grooves and laments, to love songs, and now to the subtle social commentary of *Moungaliba*. There were other covers, too, like *I Put A Spell On You* and *Black Is The Colour*.

The list of Atlas's guests and her guest

spots for others includes the likes of Sinead O'Connor, Belinda Carlisle and Mexico's Los De Abajo, to name but a few. Whatever the setting, she tries to bring her unique take on Arabic culture into play.

"The penetration of Arabic music in the West is very different today than when I was growing up, but the problem is that a lot of people still see it as "other". It's frustrating, really, because there's another side, a beautiful, poetic, deeply cultured aspect. So I hope we can change things."

The Good Earth

Ruth Moody marks her solo debut with The Garden—a gorgeously sang, meditative recording reflecting the self-inflicted angst of contemporary society. Pat Langston digs it.

ne day Ruth Moody will have a garden.

A founding member of the Canadian folk trio the Wailin' Jennys, lead singer of the late-1990s-era Celtic/folk band Scruj MacDuhk, and now the wonderful voice on a full-length solo CD, *The Garden*, Moody would like few things more than grubbing around in the dirt.

"The first four years of my life in Canada, we lived on a hobby farm in Lockport outside Winnipeg," says the gregarious Moody, who was born in Australia and came to Canada with her family when she was a year old. "We had a garden. I remember my dad paying us a penny for every potato bug we caught. And I remember eating fresh vegetables from our garden."

For now, those fresh veggies will have to come from a store. "I've been on the road for 13 years. One day, I'll settle down and have a home and a garden."

Until then, Moody's lovely new album can stand in as a musical version. Its stories about endings and new beginnings recall the seasonal cycle; folk, country and dashes of pop make for a display as colourful as any flower bed; and everything from cello to trumpet mean a blend as tasty as any that ever came from a vegetable patch. The Garden also blooms with a dazzling array of musical guests including guitarists Colin Cripps and Luke Doucet, Moody's older brother Richard from The Bills, Oh

Susanna, alt-bluegrass band Crooked Still, and Nicky Mehta and Heather Masse, the other two-thirds of the Wailin' Jennys.

Gardens, though, tend to get messy when not tended. Sings Moody in the album's title track, which is also the opening song: "And tell me / How long have we slept / How long have we wept / There is work to be done in the garden."

That unruly garden, she says, reflects how our frantic lives and our battering at the hands of technology and relentless advertising keep us from what's elemental and most important, numbing us emotionally and spiritually in the process. As we were warned decades ago by another Canadian singer, it's time to get back to the garden.

Songs like Within Without You help point the way. Moody's soprano lingers over each line of the meditative song, which she says is "about mindfulness and being in the moment. There's a stillness inside we can go to and trust, and it's more rewarding than e-mail or going to the fridge."

A skilled multi-instrumentalist, she accompanies herself on ukulele, an unusual choice for a quiet song, but one that shows just how flexible and sensitive that little instrument can be.

Her album, like any garden, grew at its own pace. Although demo tracks were laid down in the summer of 2009, *The Garden* then went into hibernation because the Wailin' Jennys were busy recording their new album, due for release at the beginning of 2011 and untitled at the time of writing.

That gave the songs a chance to find their own shape, says Moody. It may also help explain the album's timeless feel, exactly the sort of mood that steals over you when you're pottering in the garden and the world disappears.

Producer David Travers-Smith had a hand in helping the songs find their shapes.

He prompted Moody to play around with the uke until she discovered a fitting use of it in *Within Without You*.

He also ran the guitar through an amp on *Winter Waltz*, making the already spare song about love gone bad even lonelier. The guitar sounds as though it's in a separate physical space, says Moody, and she is singing along to a radio the way a heartbroken person might sing along to the broadcast of a sad song.

The strummed banjo on Tell Me was also



his idea. Banjos, Moody points out, are usually plucked in a traditional or a claw-hammer style. Although she says she's not "a big risk taker," she eventually ceded to his suggestion to strum it. The playing style adds a tone of definitiveness to Moody's plea for her lover to be upfront about his waning affections for her.

When it comes to her voice, Moody's classical training as a teenager can be detected in her effortless control on these and other songs, including the jaunty *Travellin' Shoes* ("I don't really rock out, but we wanted a bit of a Neil Young vibe on that tune.").

The training also underpins Moody's flawless pitch. Her mother was a music teacher whose children now all play either professionally or part-time. "My mom always stressed pitch. When you're in tune, it feels good in your head and in your resonators."

While studying classical music, Moody became especially interested in Celtic music, which eventually inspired her transition to folk. She wound up as lead singer for Winnipeg-based Scruj MacDuhk after discovering that bandleader Leonard Podolak, once her elementary school playmate, lived across the street.

"Those were great times. Nothing ever comes close to your first band: there's such innocence and energy. Touring for weeks on end for not much money, sleeping on floors and couches."

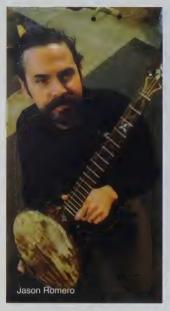
Within months of Scruj MacDuhk's breakup in 2001 (Podolak subsequently created Juno-winning the Duhks from the band's ashes), Moody had teamed up with Nicky Mehta and Cara Luft to form the Wailin' Jennys. Immensely popular from its inception, the trio saw Luft replaced by Annabelle Chvostek, who in turn was replaced by current member Masse. She and Mehta join Moody on *The Garden*'s name-appropriate closer, *Closer Now*.

Performing with the trio, says Moody, means constantly learning from one another. That in turn heightens her skills as a solo musician.

And while, on balance, the trio/solo mix is beneficial, "You always have to take the others into consideration. There are compromises. As a solo performer, you get to take the reins and explore things you couldn't otherwise."

Because she toured with the Jennys during the summer, it meant putting active promotion of her own album on hold until this fall. Moody and Mehta also co-manage the Jennys, and Moody manages her solo career as well. "I am a bit of a workaholic, so this suits me."

And makes owning a no-stress garden one day look all the better.



Grueling Banjos

Jason Romero builds some of the finest banjos in North America. And he plays them, too, with no less than 19 different fiddlers on his latest disc, Back Up And Push. Mike Sadava catches Romero with a very rare moment to spare.

and Pharis Romero's schedule. They have a week between teaching at music camps on Saltspring Island and Sorrento, BC. They're using that time to pack up the biggest U-Haul truck and move all their worldly possessions, including the contents of the workshop where they build banjos, from Vancouver Island to Horsefly, a community of 1,000 people in the Cariboo near Williams Lake, the centre of this summer's forest fires.

After that, Western Canada's power couple of old-time music will rebuild the

workshop on the lakefront property they just bought, just down the road from where Pharis grew up. Then they'll fill out the back orders for banjos and start to think about promoting their new disc, *Back Up and Push*, that features 19 fiddle tunes they recorded with 19 fiddlers up and down the West Coast.

Then they'll start planning the record they want to put out as a duo. Not to mention upcoming tours with The Haints, the string band they formed with renowned fiddle player Erynn Marshall.

It's a bit of a balancing act, but it's a pretty enviable position to be in when you're known for both building and performing. Banjo playing is a joy, while banjo building is a living.

"Music is a huge part of our lives, but it's old time so we can't make a living at it," says Jason.

In only eight years as an instrument maker, he has earned quite a reputation.

Jerry Douglas plays one of his instruments, so does Dirk Powell. And Ricky Skaggs is

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shown on his album, *Instrumentals*, playing a Romero. "Jason, Love my 'big boy' banjo," Skaggs says in a testimonial. "He rocks! ... Sure love the way it sounds, and it's so well made. You really put your heart and soul in these banjos. You do yourself proud..."

Jason started his banjo-making career at the Wildwood factory in Arcata, CA, after working as a cabinet maker. He started putting his own shop together, and within a few years had enough banjos on order that he could strike out on his own.

He builds about four instruments per month, sells them all over the world from Peru to Japan, and has brought Pharis into the business. He says she's a natural at the time-consuming, fussy job of installing decorative inlay. She also presides over the website (romerobanjos.com), which includes high-resolution photos and audio archives with the sound of the instruments.

The Romeros have built more than 200, including four and five-string banjos, resonator banjos, fretless banjos, even banjo ukuleles. They build them to fit the style of music—bluegrass or old-time—and the style of the player.

Jason plays as many styles of banjo as he builds. Like most players, he started in bluegrass, heavily influenced by players such as Tony Trischka and Bela Fleck, and played in various bluegrass bands.

But around the same time that he started building, his heart went to old-time music and his playing style evolved from three-fingered rolls in the Scruggs style to claw-hammer. He was attracted by the old-time community mantra, the idea of blending in rather than stepping out into the limelight to play a blistering solo.

Pharis came from a slightly different musical place. She rightfully earned a reputation for her vocals and songwriting with Outlaw Social, a Victoria band that blends alt-country and even a bit of rock music with an old-time feel. The two met in 2007, and Jason felt the call of the Great White North, moving to Canada and marrying Pharis.

The Haints have received many accolades from magazines and websites, including Sing Out, Bluegrass Unlimited and Americana U.K. But with Marshall now living in Virginia, where she manages a centre for the performing arts, The Haints, who often

perform with mandolinist Carl Jones, have been an occasional band.

The Romeros have played and jammed with many fiddle players as they travelled down the West Coast to various events. Jason got the concept of *Back Up and Push* on a ferry ride after they had attended Dare To Be Square, a gathering of all things square dancing in Seattle.

"We have a big musical community," he says. "Most people like it when Pharis and I back them up. It seemed like a really good idea. We took the time off and took two separate trips."

The Romeros travelled from Vancouver to the Bay Area on the first trip, followed by a trip to Portland, where 11 of the tracks were recorded and the album mixed by Ivan Rosenberg, who is also a fine clawhammer banjo and resonator guitar player.

Pharis, who plays rhythm guitar on all tracks, says it seemed strange at first to be doing an album with no vocals, given her history as a singer.

"As a singing teacher, I thought: 'What am I doing?' But there's enough variety in the sounds with the different fiddle styles."

With the recording being done in five studios, it was a challenge to get a cohesive sound, but as it turned out, the West Coast old-time sound binds it together. While the old-time genre originated in Appalachia in the eastern U.S., a slightly different sound has evolved in the West. As Pharis explains, musicians from the East who come to gatherings on the West Coast often describe



them as crazier and higher energy.

All 19 fiddlers were asked to submit tracks they wanted to do. No two submitted the same tracks, which is testament to the large amount of fiddle tunes out there. And they have a lot of colourful names, from Walk Chalk Chicken with a Necktie On to Bull at the Wagon.

It may be subtle, but there's lots of variety on the disc, which also includes a track with Marshall on fiddle. As Pharis points out, the players range from 14-year-old fiddle wunderkind Tatiana Hargreaves to veteran Portland player Dave Mount. Some tracks are straight and some are crooked. Jason has at least five different tunings for his banio.

And, yes, Jason does play a variety of Romero banjos on the disc.



Heart of Gold

With the release of *Heart Of My Own*, Basia Bulat surpasses all the expectations anticipated with the arrival of *Oh My Darling*—her Polaris Prize-nominated debut that first saw the light of day through the storied British label, Rough wate. Rough Campbell reckons she's rather special. All photos by: Frank Gasparik.

Basia Bulat

asia Bulat sings a cappella Polish folk songs, plays autoharp and invokes comparisons to Tracy Chapman, Odetta and ... er ... the Velvet Underground. One scribe even called her the love child of Nina Simone and Joni Mitchell. In these very pages, no less!

Silly buggers, music journalists, believe me. One thing, though, on which most of these ridiculous rascals readily concur: Bulat is someone a little bit special. But then we all knew that, didn't we, the moment we heard *Oh My Darling*.

Such an auspicious debut, too: full of attention-grabbing excursions that stretched from homespun chamber strings to solo ukulele. All of it lit up with a voice that could stop rush hour traffic.

Made with the remnants of her student grant and the help of former Arcade Fire drummer Howard Bilerman, *Oh My Darling* was initially released in September 2007 by the legendary British label Rough Trade, whose catalogue boasts The Smiths, The Strokes and The Libertines. It eventually came out in Canada the following year and earned a slew of ecstatic reviews and a Polaris Prize nomination, the Canadian equivalent of the U.K.'s prestigious Mercury Prize.

Reuniting with Bilerman, Bulat released *Heart of My Own* in January. And oh my, my, talk about a giant leap forward. This foot-stomping, smile-inducing, soul-stirring combination of folk and anthemic indie pop bliss absolutely brims with confidence. Largely it flows forth from that glorious voice that quivers and cradles her somewhat intimate narratives.

"Oh My Darling is an album mostly about friendships and family," says Bulat on the phone from Varberg, Sweden, where she's in the midst of a European tour. "In many ways Heart of My Own is the same thing only from a different viewpoint. I hadn't experience traveling much, certainly not with touring, before I put out the first record. That was all really new to me. A lot of Heart of My Own is inspired by travelling around North America. There were so many parts of Canada I had never been. And all these trips were really amazing and really special to do with friends. But also, things change and you change. So Heart of

My Own was exploring these changes."

All the same, there's a dynamic aspect to this disc lacking, to some extent, on its predecessor. Cue the brilliant, pulsating *Gold Rush* and its magnificent acoustic amalgamation of accordion, autoharp, banjo, bass, drums, violin and viola.

"Gold Rush needed to feel really big.
Every song tells me what to do. I'm really a
slave to whatever the song says at the time
(she giggles). Eventually, it can change
over time."

This interview actually starts innocuously backstage at the Edmonton Folk Music Festival the week before, where a brief mainstage appearance between two of the festival's heavyweight attractions left the diminutive Bulat buzzing days later.

"Appearing between Calexico and Levon Helm was just the craziest thing," she enthuses. "On that stage, and during the lantern ceremony, it was really beautiful. It was just one of those things that was so nice to be a part of."

She's quite something to behold live, too, is Basia Bulat. While drawing on two to four accompanying musicians, depending

on a workshop or concert setting, she plays guitar, ukulele, keyboards, bass, banjo and, quite magnificently, the autoharp—an instrument she first heard on Carter Family records. But then Will Oldham, better known by his stage name Bonnie Prince Billy, booked a small, intimate gig in Ottawa and Bulat and her friends drove from Toronto to hear him perform.

"I never saw an autoharp played until Will Oldham. Almost the entire show was him and an autoharp. And it was kind of spellbinding. It's actually got this magical sound to it and it's also extremely prosaic. That's the appeal for me. There's also something about it that's hard to place but it seems to fit in my mind when I'm writing and it seems to be something that I just really love.

"My mom was the one who picked it up from one of our neighbours, who was selling it, and that's how it all started."

Basia Bulat grew up around Toronto's Lake Shore amidst an extended Polish family. Her mom taught piano and guitar and her dad worked in an office. Both Basia and her brother, Bobby, quickly developed



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www.ocff.ca 1-866-292-6233 their mom's interest in music. Basia played and sang in every orchestra, choir, stage and youth band that would have her. And he would eventually play drums on her records. Together they spent hours listening to the likes of Stax and Motown on Toronto retro radio station 1050 CHUM AM and scouring charity shops for old vinyl.

"My brother found—it must have been in Value Village or Goodwill—Odetta Live At The Town Hall LP. Because he found it, even though I said we should get it, he gets to own it. We kind of share custody of it even though it's rightfully his. I definitely treasure it, that's for sure. It's in great condition and it's an amazing album."

Bulat initially discovered Odetta through the eulogizing of Bob Dylan. "When somebody like Bob Dylan says Odetta was a huge influence on him, you are going to look up who that is and be knocked over by how amazing she is." Bulat would meet Odetta in Toronto at Hugh's Room, Oct. 25, 2008. Sadly, it was Odetta's last official performance. She died from heart complications five weeks later.

"I totally lost it when I met her. I was all teary and so emotional. I was so happy to meet her and see her perform. She was such an emotional spirit, such a powerful singer."

hile Odetta proved an obvious inspiration, Bulat cites the somewhat more obscure, classically trained, multi-faceted, German performer Klaus Nomi as a serious influence due to his uncompromising artistic approach to music. Nomi, best known for his stylized theatrical performances, luminously painted face and outrageous outfits, once sang with and designed costumes for David Bowie. Nomi died in New York in 1983 of AIDS.

"More than anything, I like musicians that are not afraid to be themselves. It doesn't really matter what genre, and it doesn't really matter what kind of voice it is, whether it is good or bad. I think one of my favourite singers is probably Klaus Nomi, who's technically an amazing singer. He was trained as an opera singer and he ended up doing these fantastic albums with synths. He is an incredible, incredible singer and has had a lot of influence on dance music and techno and contemporary music. But as

a singer, he's actually somebody I look up to for being brave enough to be himself. To just sing out the way he does."

Bulat left home for London, ON, to study English literature at the University of Western Ontario. Once there, though, she considered studying science, becoming a veterinarian, and dropping music completely. That notion passed, fortunately.

Indeed, her time there proved fruitful as she made friends with numerous likeminded musicians, held down a weekly slot as a DJ on the campus radio station, CHRW, and played her first real gig in 2004 at the Round Tower Bar. Two years later, working in Montreal for the summer, friends introduced her to Howard Bilerman, as previously noted a fortuitous encounter with massive repercussions.

Co-owner of the celebrated Hotel2Tango studio, he had worked with such significant indie artists as Godspeed You! Black Emperor, Vic Chestnut, British Sea Power and, of course, Arcade Fire. Bulat wanted Bilerman to record what she considered an informal "audible memory" of the music she worked on with her friends in London and Montreal. He, however, grew infatuated with her voice and songs and pitched them to anybody who would listen. The nod came from Geoff Travis at Rough Trade and the rest, as they say, is history.

"Maybe this just sounds a bit schmaltzy, but anyone who knows me would say this "I totally lost it when I met her. I was all teary and so emotional. I was so happy to meet her and see her perform. She was such an emotional spirit, such a powerful singer."

- Basia Bulat meets Odetta

is pretty accurate: music has always been a big part of my life and I find it really important to be around people that I feel are family. Howard, I have come to feel, is like family to me, you know, like another brother or something. He understands what I want and I don't have to say too much. We just get to work."

Her next album, she insists, will be an album of Polish folk songs, a couple of which she currently sings live a cappella. These songs came from her parents and grandparents as well as records. As a kid, Bulat spoke Polish fluently but her vocabulary diminished through time. So now she sees this upcoming record as a means of reconciling with her heritage.

"This is something I need to do. Just the experience of singing in Polish is something that has a very personal meaning to me. I'm hoping I can get it done by the end of the year but it might be next year. I have a busy schedule. We'll see how fast I can make it but it's going to happen. I'm trying to write in Polish, too, which is the hard part but, hopefully, I can."



Enoch Kent

The Penguin Eggs Interview



hen the British folk revival first picked up a head of steam, Enoch Kent stood in the vanguard. As a traditional singer in Glasgow, he co-founded The Reivers-the first professional folk group in Scotland-with fellow art student Josh MacRae, who went on to write Messing About On The River. And when Kent moved to London in 1962, Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger came calling. They wanted Kent to join their Singers Club alongside Bert Lloyd and Joe Meaney. Together they founded what many consider the first ever folk club in the pub The Pindar of Wakefield. Kent then formed The Exiles with London-based Scots Gordon

McCulloch and Bobby Campbell.
They would record two LPs for Topic Records, the material from which later showed up in the repertoires of the likes of Dougle MacLean and Dick Gaughan.

Kent immigrated to Canada in 1967 and appeared at Mariposa alongside Joni Mitchell and Gordon Lightfoot. A personal tragedy, however, put an end to his performing. That aspect of his life is documented in *Penguin Eggs* No. 16 and doesn't require revisiting here. Tam Kearney of Friends of Fiddlers Green inspired Kent to sing again. And in 2002, he made *I'm A Workin' Chap*, his first album in 36 years. Four others soon followed. Garnet Rogers and Jean

Redpath are among those who have covered songs from these discs. Kent won a Canadian Folk Music Award for Traditional Singer of the Year in 2008 for his album *One More Round*. And now he has just released the stellar *Take A Trip With Me*. The title comes from a line in the Woody Guthrie song 1913 Massacre. Kent's songs have an endearing and profound social quality nurtured from a working-class upbringing. Questions by Roddy Campbell.

When did you become aware of Woody Guthrie?

Oh, when I was a kid in Glasgow. My father was a socialist. He managed to be a

free mason and a communist at the same time. I think maybe he just liked joining things. I went to various socialist functions with him and sang at the union dance and all that kind of stuff. He was the guy that more or less educated me at the end of the kitchen table. All the socialist groups had booklets and records from various places so I had records including songs of Woody Guthrie, the Wobblies [International Workers of the World] and the working class movement in the U.S.A. Various people had been in the Merchant Navy and brought them back.

When the Woody Guthrie stuff came in, I asked my dad why did this happen [The 1913 Massacre]? And he said any union he was involved in was always formed on the basis that issues would be debated into real sense. Whereas, union activism in the United States frequently ended up in gunfire. So violence was a very cruel but common occurrence in American unions.

What happened in 1940 when Woody Guthrie wrote this song, he wrote about something that happened away back in 1913. When Woody heard that story, the shock must have been terrible. And this is really what this album is about. He brought a picture to mind. The story of using thugs and scabs to brutalize your own workers had happened in the coal mines in Britain. There are many songs about that: The Blackleg Miner, The Coal Owner and The Pitman's Wife—songs from the north of England. I knew these songs although they weren't Scottish because they came out of the booklets.

How did you come across the story of Ginger Goodman?

I sang at Mayfest, run by Doug Cox. And a woman heard me there and told her husband [Brian Charlton], a retired union guy. She liked what I was saying and singing. So he said, 'We're having a do in Comox. We'd like you to come; we will give you a fee to sing at this bean supper.' So I go there. I said to this guy, 'The little I know about this area it used to be covered in coal mines.' He said, 'Oh yes, we have a mining museum here.' ... So we go along to this place and he tells me that every year there's a procession from the town out to the local cemetery. I said, 'What's that all about.'

He said, 'It's about Ginger Goodwin.' ... So we sit down and he tells me the story of Ginger Goodwin, who came from Yorkshire. He had been thrown out of his home more than once because his dad had tried to start a union there. So when he came to Vancouver Island he wouldn't join the army. He was a pacifist and a conscientious objector because it was 1918 when all this took place. The only grounds for being a conscientious objector in those days was on religious grounds. He had declared himself an atheist and was trying to start a union so they threw him out of the coal mine. He went to the metal workers. They formed a union under his guidance. ...

The army examined him and classified him 4A. The Prime Minister of Canada had said all workers who are going to join the army had to be 1A. Two weeks later he gets a call from the doctors, he gets called in and pronounced 1A. The owners hate him. The government don't like him. So he fled into the woods. The families from Cumberland, Courtenay and Comox, against the law, sent him food.

They gave the job of bringing him in to a guy called Campbell. He had been fired from the local constabulary for shaking down two women for money. Campbell was known for two things; one, he was a greedy bastard, and two, he was a hunter. ... He took a hunting rifle instead of a service revolver, which was standard issue for bringing people in. And he shot Ginger Goodwin and there was a trial to take place in the local judiciary hall but somebody in the government switched it to Victoria. ... So there was nobody to stand up for Ginger. So Campbell got away with it. The whole thing was, here's a man who spoke on behalf of others and they did him in. Every year now on the date of his death. there's a parade in town out to that [cemetery]. It's a real piece of Canadian history.

And The Pawnshop Window?

The point about the pawn shop is the window. My wife and I went down to the window and I recorded everything she said. We discussed why did things end up there. That's when I made this song up.

... Outside the window looking in, you are wondering about, or you are there to buy something? On the inside, life is way

different. In fact, it's a private world and it should be private because there's a point of shame attached to being there. 'You're poor, you should be ashamed of yourself. You're out of work, you should be ashamed of yourself.'

That's not just Scottish, that's everywhere. 'This guy's able-bodied. He should be working.' People shout at homeless people, 'Get a job and all that shite.' You're at the bottom and that's when stuff ends up in the window. They're not coming back; they're not going to redeem it because it's past the due date. I found it quite touching. ... I don't write songs that is going to cure everything. What I do in my songs is paint a picture and get people to imagine the picture. I virtually ask people to observe something instead of 'join the union while you may, don't wait 'til your dying day.' I don't sing songs that is going to prove anything other than say, 'Can you have another look at this'.

There are literally hundreds of traditional songs you could pick from; how do you decide on what to record?

Every CD I've made, it's always from the working-class point of view. Every one of them. I can't write any other way so why bother. If you are going to be somebody else you are going to fail. The Galawa Hills, there is a situation: you're in trouble when you are not allowed to speak your own language; wear your own dress [tartan]; play your own instruments; you are not allowed to gather because the invad-



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ers said you are not going to do that. Anyway, *The Galawa Hills* appealed to me through a little thing that Hamish Henderson had written that this in fact a Jacobite song. I though this is a case of somebody who is trapped.

What about Bonnie Susie Clelland?

It's a dark, dark piece of work. And it's definitely Scottish. An outsider was not to be trusted. Women had no choice in life but to get married. So this guy turns up and she wants to marry him. The father says, 'No.' And she says, 'Yes.' And the father publicly murders her by burning her at the stake in front of everybody in town. And that's to say to everybody, 'I am fucking powerful so don't mess with me.'

Now that's not unusual and it still goes on. There are three guys in jail in Toronto right now. Two of them, the father and the son battered their daughter/sister to death and claimed it was an act of honour. I don't get it. I spoke to Peggy Seeger about this and she was the one who told me about it in *Bonnie Susie Clelland*. This is man's inhumanity to man; Robert Burns was right.

Where did your guitar come from, initially? That was a rather exotic instrument at the time.

My dad bought it for me. It had been in a shop window. It was a wreck. I used to sing with Jimmie Macgregor, of Robin Hall and Jimmie Macgregor fame. Jimmie was a year ahead of me at art school. I met him there and I knew all these songs and Jimmie could always strum along. He was actually a good accompanist. And then Jimmie said, 'I'm going down to London, I'm going into skiffle.' I said, 'Fine.' I was still at art school and also singing with Josh MacRae, he was in the same year as me. He was a really good artist and painter. We used to get a good crowd when we were singing away. And Josh gets called up into the army. I had done my time, my national service. And Josh gets called up. He's now married, going to have a baby, he's living down in Ayrshire and he's working in a bar, and

he's singing on TV with me and he's in the army, all at the same time.

Anyway, Josh couldn't go to a couple of gigs. I had an agent, an absolute nutter called Cliff Hanley. He gets me a gig in Dundee. He says, 'You're on for 15 minutes. Sing American songs if you can.' 'Why?' 'Well, it's a big crowd. There's a guy who is famous for playing the piano with his gloves on. There's the Clyde Valley Stompers. And it's in Dundee on a Sunday. No drink'. I go to Dundee on the bus. I had to learn these three chords before I went. I've now learned *The Ox Driver's Song*. It's the only American song that I know. I sung it with a bit of pace and brought the house down....

Then I played Gin I Awa Whaur the Gadie Rins and I looked down and there was five couples jiving in the aisles. They were really interested in Scottish culture. I got out of there playing the guitar. So that's where the guitar came into my life. It's not my friend. I've still used the same three chords for the last 50 years.

How did The Reivers come about?

There was a guy called Jimmy Sutherland, he was part of the left-wing club. He was an actor and a director. He became the director of a Scottish television program called *Jig Time*. His idea of *Jig Time* was a barn dance. There would be dancers and Jimmy Blair's Scottish Country Dance Band. And they wanted singers. So Sutherland said to my brother-in-law [Norman Buchan] do you know any traditional singers? And Norman said my brother-in-law is a traditional singer. But he said.

'We need more than one. We would really like a group.' So I said, 'I'll get Josh [Mac-

Rae].' And Norman said, 'I'll phone Rena [Swankie] and Moyna [Flanagan].' So that was the four of us met.

We went up for an audition and we got signed on the spot. I don't know if we got signed out of despera-



tion or they had nothing else to offer. We got 10 pound each. I hadn't made 20 pound wages then. You had to go to a rehearsal and you got 10 pound for that, too. We got 20 pound a week. It was only on for one year.

You went to London in 1962 and got in tow with Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger?

I knew MacColl. I went to hear him sing in Glasgow and bought his book called Scotland Sings published by the Workers Music Association. Ewan came to hear me sing. And he said, 'We are going to form a group. It's called The Singers Club. We thought Peggy [Seeger] and myself, you, Bert Lloyd and Joe Heaney.' I said, 'Christ that's a heavy group.' He said, 'The rules are they're

not firm rules, but you sing from your own tradition. I'm fed up listening to boys from Kentish Town singing skiffle songs about *I Don't Want Your Greenback Dollar* and wouldn't know what a greenback dollar is.' So I said, 'Sure.'

And it worked very, very well. You see I was the only guy in that group that had already been a singer. All the rest came and were trained to be a MacColl singer. I was an Enoch Kent singer and he never once said you should be singing a certain way. Or you should do this. He left me entirely alone. I have to respect him for that because I don't think I could have taken it, to tell you the truth.

How would you describe his personality?

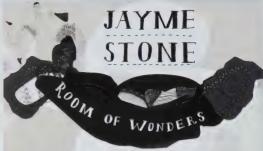
He was the most generous and most maligned guy I ever met in my life. Everyone

thinks that he was a tyrant, he was this, and he was that. He didn't suffer fools gladly.

Every time I needed something Ewan would make sure I got it. He would invite me to his house. I was sitting in the chair opposite him one night and he brought down







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a bottle of whiskey—a single malt but it's clear; it looks like gin. We're supping away and he says, 'I've written a song for Peggy, I'd like you to hear it. I said, 'Really, what's it about?' He said it's about her. He said, she's in the States and they wouldn't let him in because he was a communist. 'So I wrote this song and I sang it to her the other night and I'd like you to hear it.'

So I'm sitting there drinking whiskey and he sings to me, in front of the fire, two guys, and he sings The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face, which is an incredibly moving song. It's a most passionate song. It's based on a poem by John Donne. He wrote The First Time I Laid with You. It's an absolutely fantastic song. It's funny for a guy getting excited about his woman. But he was a very generous guy. If asked him, 'You know that song you sang about your father?' 'My Old Man?' 'Yeah, My Old Man.' 'Peggy put on the tape recorder.' So he would make a tape for me right there. Now that's generous. I liked him, he was a great conversationalist and a fantastic storyteller.

The Pindar of Wakefield was considered by many the very first folk club; how did it come about?

Ewan found the Pindar of Wakefield, or somebody told him about it. It was a really good pub with a big hall. The locals weren't interested so they didn't bother. Some of them did but not very often. I met Bob Dylan there. I thought this guy has got something. The first song he sang was the John Birch Society Blues. It was all about finding commies under your bed. And I thought this guy he's one of us. He was at the Pindar of Wakefield with Dick and Mimi Farina. Somebody told me about him and I went up and said, 'Do you want to sing a couple of songs?' And he said, 'Sure.' I thought he was a very nice guy.

How did The Exiles come about?

The Exiles came together because of Gordon McCulloch. We were all working in London. I had taken time off to work for the Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament [CND]. I was sitting in a café and Gordon came over and sat down next to me and said, 'Bobby and I have been listening to

you singing and think we would make a terrific group with the three of us.' I said, 'Upon what basis?' And he said, 'Well, we have the same [political] point of view and we sing Scottish songs. You singing and us accompanying and singing a wee bit.' He had it down to a level that was unavoidable, really. I couldn't say no to the offer. So they came to my house and we rehearsed and went out and played and then we got a contract from Topic.

Gordon was basically the musical director because when songs came up for discussion to be sung, I never said nothing. Most of the singing was done by me and I was writing songs at this time and Gordon decided to put them on the first album. On traditional songs, 'Why don't you sing the lead and we'll sing the chorus?'

We made two records and when I play them I think we were right to do that. Sometimes you look back and wish you hadn't done that but The Exiles' records. I still think, and people have said this to me—those guys in big bands—if you hadn't made these records we wouldn't have got into folk music

When you came to Canada, were there places to sing?

When I arrived in Toronto there was no folksong clubs. Eventually one emerged, Tam Cairney's Friends of Fiddlers Green, which was a fantastic success. I think part of the success was the rundown establishment. It was about to fall down never mind run down. I don't know if it was condemned but it should have been. They would cram people in there against all the rules.

You played Mariposa in the early days, too.



Estelle Klein called me up. I'd never met her but I'd heard about her and she said, 'Would you like to sing at Mariposa?' And I said, 'That would be wonderful.' I think it was at Innis Lake. It was the weirdest experience. I met Gordon Lightfoot; he was a very young guy. And he was singing his songs and they were very fresh and very naive. ... Joni Mitchell could knock out a song. She was there and she sang.

How would you describe yourself?

I've got to admit I'm a difficult guy to book. What do you describe me as? I don't stick with the tradition. I can do it. I don't stick with the songwriting. I can do it. If it's in that [political] mindset I discussed earlier, that I am singing straight on not looking down or up to somebody, I'm interested in it. If you were an agent for me, it's a horrible job. How do you describe this guy? But I don't care, because I can't change. And I'm so happy to be different.















"Beautiful, expressive, unpretentious music from the ancient Kingdom of Northumbria." — The Unthanks Page 49 "This is the best record that Great Big Sea has ever made!"

- Great Big Sea Page 49



Robert Randolph and the Family Band

We Walk This Road (Independent

As a rule, whatever T Bone Burnett touches turns to gold. Yet, upon hearing guest vocalist Will Gray's streetwise hip-hop on his own *Back to the Wall*, it seemed like Randolph's rousing brand of sacred steel had fallen victim to A&R spreadsheets or producer-itis. The purity of his sound compromised for the sake of urban sales? Wrong.

Given his Family Band's proclivity to showcase music beyond any confines of their gospel-based upbringing, this release embraces the blues of Blind Willie Johnson, the political ire of John Lennon, the pop perkiness of Prince and the contemporary roots grasp of Peter Case, all shepherded by Burnett's keen sense of new modern music, stitched together by Randolph's other-worldly gifts on pedal steel.

In other words, nothing is sacred when it comes to Randolph's brand of sacred steel. Yet, as eclectic as this mix of covers appears to be, it all lifts off the page as a rousing tribute to the universality of great music. Of course, there are some delicious highlights: Dylan's Shot of Love gains a

shot of real religion; Lennon's I Don't Wanna Be A Soldier Mama is a mind-blowing accomplishment, and adding Doyle Bramhall II and Burnett on guitar, reinvigorates the original

The somewhat hypnotic I'm Not Listening burns with a gospel core while the haunting Salvation - adding Leon Russell's soulful touch on piano - proves breathtaking. Randolph channelling classic Allmans as bassist Danyel Morgan's high-reaching voice takes the song to mystical heights. We Walk This Road's musical tour is grounded by excerpts from Mitchell's Christian Singers, a '30s gospel group, as Randolph's pedal steel stitches the entire panorama together, reminding one and all of the ability of music to lift our spirits, binding us together in timeless fashion. - By Eric Thom

Robert Plant

Band of Joy (Rounder Records)

Robert Plant could very easily be doing Led Zeppelin reunion tours until the cows come home but in recent years he has chosen to follow his passion for early American music. His album with Alison Krauss. Raising Sand, picked up six Grammys.

Band of Joy (which was actually the name of the first band he was in with John Bonham) continues Plant's wonderful exploration of American music. It actually started many, many years ago with both The Yardbirds and Led Zeppelin when they and other British bands of the '60s delved into early American blues music, gave it their own slant and helped bring it back to America and to the world.

These days he is obviously enjoying doing the same thing, just in a slightly different genre.

Nashville legend Buddy Miller, who toured with Plant



Reviews

on the Raising Sand dates, produces and plays on Band of Joy along with Byron House, Marco Giovino, Darrell Scott and Patty Griffin—some of the best musicians Nashville has to offer.

Besides a few original songs, most come from several other sources including the lead single, Los Lobos' Angel Dance, Townes's Harms Swift Way, as well as House of Cards by Richard Thompson, plus well-worn traditional tunes such as Cindy I'll Marry You Someday and Satan Your Kingdom Must Come Down, every one delivered with Plant's patented vocals and each steeped in the traditions of folk, gospel and blues.

It's rare for any artist to still be pushing musical boundaries after 50 years. Robert Plant is, and making some of the best music of his career.

- By Allison Brock

Kim Beggs

Blue Bones (Black Hen Music)

Here's a soulful and inviting collection of (mostly) self-penned tunes from Yukon singer-songwriter, Kim Beggs. As with most releases on Black Hen, Steve Dawson both produces and plays on Blue Bones, and brings a relaxed confidence to Beggs' homespun songs. The end-result is a combination of top-notch musicianship and gentle humility that proves very winning! There are traces of country, folk, and old-timey influences in the songs, which topically run the gamut from yodeling in the car to losing a brother to just being lost and lonesome. The four covers are well-chosen (particularly a great rendition of Dylan's I'll Be Your Baby Tonight) and sit nicely alongside the originals. Guests include Laurie Lewis. Gurf Morlix, Steve Dawson,

Reviews



and a slew of others, but the focus is firmly on Beggs' voice and songs. *Blue Bones* is a gem!

— By Richard Thornley

Chatham County Line Wildwood (Yep Roc Records)

Clark Cart I

Chatham County Line has been remarkably consistent since their 2003 debut. They replaced bassist Ned DuRant with multi-instrumentalist Greg Reading and have taken to producing themselves instead of relying on original producer Chris Stamey. The rest of the Raleigh, NC, band's lineup has stayed the same: brilliant songwriter and singer/guitarist Dave Wilson, John Teer (mandolin, fiddle, viola) and Chandler Holt (banjo), they constitute one of the best young bluegrass bands with a folk/pop sensibility rather like a bluegrass version of Old Crow Medicine Show.

Dave Wilson's plaintive voice and classic songwriting are still their strongest draws but the band as a whole has proved its mettle over the four previous discs (Chatham County Line, Route 23, Speed Of The Whippoorwill, and IV).

This latest disc is another strong contribution with the history of modern music resonating in every note, sweet harmony, and word (like the lyrics of *Ringing In My Ears*, which name checks a history of songwriting greats).

These boys are the real thing. If you want great songs from a young band with a bluegrass flavour, get all their discs. Every one is a classic.

- By Barry Hammond

Sisters Euclid: Featuring Sandy Dillon and Ray Majors

96 Tears (Tradition & Moderne)

What can be said about Kevin Breit, the Glenn Gould of the electric guitar? This German release is brilliant-with one disclaimer. The silver-throated Breit has substituted Sandy Dillon as lead vocalist and hers is a voice that dominates the proceedings: you'll either love it or run, screaming, from the room. Self-billed as "jazz-punk western blues", the Cape Cod-born Berklee grad has earned her stripes in eclectic fashion-the fact that she eventually became the voice of Janis Joplin on Broadway goes part-way in describing her vocal potential.

In fact, this artful collection of well-off-the-beaten-path cover songs includes Joplin's *Move Over* and she absolutely

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Wendell and Wheat



channels the original—with a dark twist. Jumping from little girl innocence (Dead Flowers) to blood-curdling screamers (Dust Pneumonia Blues), Dillon approximates turf somewhere between Marianne Faithful gargling razor blades and Tom Waits's angry, estranged sister—her intensity indirectly accentuating the gorgeous playing underneath across some of the best songs ever.

Dillon's husband, guitarist Ray Majors (Mott the Hoople/ British Lions) adds to Breit's guitar muscle, as if such is required, but the net result of this trip, which embraces everyone from Woody Guthrie to Captain Beefheart, Lou Reed to The Doors, is the delightful re/deconstruction of songs that are part of our collective DNA—somehow adding to their lustre.

As stated by the label, 96 Tears is "a dark cycle of songs that may lead you to a different place" and, in so doing, Sisters Euclid makes its case against "the shallowness of corporate pop culture". Breit & Co. succeed in making the best even better through this off-kilter experiment. Whether you buy Dillon's take on Howlin' Wolf's How Many More Years or accept her droning reinvention of





? and the Mysterians' title track (without the need to rely on its signature keyboard riff!) is anyone's guess. To say that she grows on you, in the context of the inventive, Beefheartian backdrop, is a calculated risk worth taking.

- By Eric Thom

Peter Case

Wig! (YepROC Records)

"From depths of woe I raise to thee." Peter Case was knocked down hard but rose up to produce one amazing album with Wig!. A year in a life can make a big difference—Case in point (pun intended): one double bypass, five days in the hospital and a six-figure medical bill. Fortunately for Case, his friends and fans rallied to raise the money for the cost of his care. After a year off to heal, the three-time Grammy-nominated artist came back rocking the blues with his latest full-on electric album, accompanied by DJ Bonebrake of X on drums and Ron Franklin from Gasoline Silver on lead guitar.

Wig! is the Man with the Blue post-modern fragmented neo-traditionalist [Electric] Guitar. Wig! opens with a haunting, gritty piano and drum blues shuffle in Banks of the River and rolls into a full-on shaker with I Dig What You're Putting Down. The party continues and concludes with a softer Peter Case in House Party Rent, an ironic, optimistic twist on being down and out. Case's ability to spin a yarn with social comment while making your feet tap and your heart pound is masterful. A

fourth Grammy nomination for

Peter and his *Wig!*, perhaps?

– By Phil Harries

Great Big Sea

Safe Upon The Shoe (Warner Musi)

Right from the kick off you know this is going to be good. Just hearing the way slide guitar legend Sonny Landreth ignites the storming opener, Long Life, with his incendiary playing, is enough to let you know something new is afoot for The Rock's finest.

Another thing that hits you is the strength of the lyrics. There's some great hooks here. One look at the songwriting credits tells you things have been beefed up in this department, with the involvement of co-writers like Joel Plaskett, Randy Bachman, Paul Lamb, Jeremy Fisher, Jeen O'Brien, Russell Crowe and Greg

Browne.

There are a few typically rousing GBS barn burners. like the aforementioned Long Life, Hit the Ground and Run, Road To Ruin and Don't Wanna Go Home, Wanderin' Ways also falls within that category and features the fine chorus, "Farewell to the whisky. tobacco and smoke / Farewell to the rum and occasional coke /Farewell to the girls who came ready to play / For this is the end of my wandering ways." The title track is an a capella drowned sailor ballad, Nothing But a Song is bright and poppy, Yankee Sailor is a countryesque unrequited love song while Good People is medium paced and a bit reminiscent of CSN&Y

Producer Steve Berlin, of East L.A. legends Los Lobos, deserves credit for pulling the best out of everyone involved and making the whole CD sparkle. This is the best record that Great Big Sea has ever made!

— By Tim Readman

The Unthanks

Here's the Tender Coming (Rough Trade)
Another fine offering from
the artists formerly known as
Rachel Unthank and the Winter
Set. Here's the Tender Com-



Reviews

ing continues where their previous release, *The Bairns*, left off.

There's a strange paradox to be found in their developing reputation. Many in the folk world shrugged them off at first as harsh and hard to take, whilst more sweet and smooth singers became evermore popular on that circuit.

Meanwhile the mainstream media embraced them, enchanted by the strength, directness and frequently heartbreaking honesty of their delivery. Consequently, they came extremely close to lifting a much-coveted Mercury prize with their first release. Their arrangements are stunning, throwing unexpected changes in feel and texture into the mix with unusual and innovative instrumentation.

It is the singing, however, that remains as the single-most compelling feature of their performances. Rachel and her little sister, Becky, have a remarkable quantity of colour and emotion in their delivery, and their harmonies are sibling-close and continually surprising.

As if that isn't enough, their choice of material is superb. I defy anyone to listen to the story unfolding in their rendition of *The Testimony of Patience Kershau* and not shudder and recoil at the brutality of the lurid description of her working life in the English coal mines of the 1840s.

Producer and pianist
Adrian McNally contributes the splendid Lucky
Gilchrist, with its brilliant
chanting chorus. Teesside
legend Graeme Miles's Sad
February is deeply touching, and Becky's reading of
the traditional tragic ballad

Annachie Gordon could melt a heart of stone.

There are some great light touches as well, such as the slightly smutty Where've Yer Bin Dick, and the fantastic bonus track medley of Newcastle music hall songs featuring some lovely foot percussion. Beautiful, expressive, unpretentious music from the ancient Kingdom of Northumbria. What are you waiting for?

— By Tim Readman

Connie Kaldor

Postcards from the Road (Outside Music)

Fourteen releases and counting. A career built by travelling across this continent numerous times, gig by gig. Connie Kaldor has done just about everything right in her 30-plus years as a staple of the Canadian folk music scene, especially writing great songs. So Postcards from the Road is another solid effort with, as always, a couple of stellar songs.

Miner's Wife and Ride Gone Wrong are as good as any song Connie has written and they're delivered in her inimitable folk cabaret style. The other 11 tunes are merely solid, well-written and welldelivered songs. A touch too many love songs for my liking but then again can you really argue with a sincere and heartfelt love song?



Produced by Davey Gallant and her husband, Paul Campagne, the album has peaks and valleys in all the right places, from solo piano and voice to full rocking band.

So Connie delivers once again as we have come to expect from someone who epitomizes the words 'seasoned pro'. Since I first fell for her strong voice and amazing songs so many years ago, it's always a pleasure to listen to new material from Ms. Kaldor.

- by les siemieniuk

Marc Jordan, Murray McLauchan, Cindy Church and Ian Thomas

More Lunch At Allen's (Linus Ent.)

Eliza Gilkyson, John Gorka and Lucy Kaplansky

Red Horse (Red House Records)

Lunch At Allen's began as a get-together at Allen's Pub and Restaurant on the Danforth in Toronto with Murray McLauchlan, Ian Thomas and Marc Jordan. After Cindy Church joined them, mere lunch turned into a pretty good band performing songs from each of these songwriters' bodies of work. More Lunch At Allen's is their third effort together.

Red Horse, on the other hand, comes galloping to us from three major voices in contemporary American folk music:



Eliza Gilkyson, John Gorka and Lucy Kaplansky. Certainly you can't go wrong combining such artists and not expect good work to result. And so it is.

Over the course of the *Red Horse*'s 12 tracks, each of the trio takes the lead on four: one original song, one each from the two other members and then one from Neil Young. Among the accomplishments: Gorka's *If These Walls Could Talk*, Kaplansky delivering a great take on Gilkyson's *Sanctuary* and Eliza returning the favour with a lovely version of Lucy's *Promise Me*.

Having these three talents converge on one record is a dream album but what does go slightly wrong is that although this is a group project there are no songs that feature all three singers on the same track. It seems like a workshop at a Canadian folk festival where the

artists don't quite participate together as much as the audience hopes they could have.

The same can be said about *More Lunch At Allen's*. Although there is more collaboration and interaction among the four Canadian compadres, it still seems like a collection of songs from each person done by the group. There is one new tune co-written and performed by Cindy and Murray.

So in the end, both are very good albums, with great songs from celebrated and established artists, yet, I think both projects could have been extraordinary if the members had taken a more band-like approach.

Co-written more, collaborated more, or even did more unique cover versions of other songwriters' works. Then the sums would truly have been greater than the parts—in both cases.

- by les siemieniuk

fer ample proof.

Bouyed by an assembled cast that reaches biblical proportions with the inclusion of a choir and a symphony orchestra, Dawn Time Riot stumbles out of the gate, somewhat, with the brief but pointless thrash instrumental Cliff Jumping. The gorgeously lavish Wind From The South, however, quickly sets matters to rights. More experimental than Hardwater, their last EP. Dawn Time Riot ranges from the country-bluegrass hoe down romp of Freight Train to the dark and spacey layers of You Don't Mind.

Surprisingly, despite the legions of musicians at play here, there's nothing contrived or jangling, albeit the smattering of guitar shredding that closes the gorgeous hymn-like Sailor. Concession St. and Ronnie Hawkins forge ahead on a glorious bed of driving brass and banjo—quintessential Gertrudes hallmarks.

But the absolute best they saved for last. Catfish John can sit alongside anything Gram Parsons or The Byrds ever wrote. Believe it. This mighty hobo anthem, with its soaring choral arrangements, closes out what must be regarded as another considerable milestone for the mighty Gertrudes. And that's serious progress, pilgrim.

- By Roddy Campbell

The Gertrudes

Dawn Time Riot (AppleCrisp Records)

And about bloody time, too. It's only taken them the better part of three years to record a full-scale album. OK, so they took *The Blackbird And The Cedar* and *The Gertrudes* from their self-titled debut EP, but clearly this Kingston-based co-operative now have a handle on this recording malarky. The superior re-recorded tracks of-





Martin Simpson (UK) Sat. Oct 2nd Ron Hynes (NL) Sat, Oct 23rd Sat. Nov 6th Dennis Lakusta with Allannah Dow (BC) Homefest 2010 Sun, Nov 7th Sat, Nov 20th "Wise and Weathered" (Catherine MacLellan,

Raghu Lokanathan & Kim Barlow) (NS,BC,YT) "Blue Bird North" (Karla Anderson, Rob

Sat, Jan 15th Heath, John Wort Hannam & John Mann T.B.A.

Sat, Feb 5th Sat, Feb 19th April Verch (ON)

Karen Savoca & Pete Heitzman (US) Sat, Mar 5th

Sat, Mar 19th Martyn Joseph (UK) Sat, Apr 2nd Lennie Gallant (NS)

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Reviews

Yousson N'Dour

I Bring What I Love (Nonesuch Records) Youssou N'Dour's I Bring What I Love is the soundtrack to a documentary film covering two years of struggle by the famed Senegalese singer. The film's punchy visuals and emphatic message of tolerance were greeted receptively in the West while back at home. severe criticism rained down upon N'Dour.

His album Egypt was released in 2004. It was an homage to Senegal's most important Muslim leader, Chaikh Amadou Bamba. A lifelong observant Muslim, N'Dour has been deeply troubled by what he feels is a widespread negative perception of Islam. He felt called upon to use his unique voice to inspire a more tolerant understanding of Africa's Muslims. It was a personal disaster, then, to be roundly condemned by Senegal's religious leaders, who rejected his mixture of secular music with religious lyrics. The album was denounced as blasphemous and, after years of star status, Egypt was the first N'Dour album to fail at

N'Dour is well noted for his humanitarian work. He has been a tireless advocate fighting to roll back malaria, and through his personal foundation he has financed schools for street kids, scholarships for women in post-graduate studies, and programs for young artists to develop business skills. He also owns a newspaper and a popular radio station in Dakar.

Maintained by his deep faith and his conviction in the rightness of his efforts, N'Dour persevered in touring the music of Egypt to promote a broader understanding of Islam, trusting that his message could only have positive results. "We are modern griots," he says. "We must talk about things; we

must talk about our religion."

And then, an ironic twist: Egypt wins a Grammy, a fact which apparently had tremendous impact on N'Dour's detractors. The message of tolerance and understanding has been appreciated abroad and is rewarded with the American music industry's highest recognition. Following two years of criticism, N'Dour brandishes his Grammy award overhead in a triumphal parade through the streets of Dakar, proceeding to a reception with the president.

Which brings us to the soundtrack of I Bring What I Love. Naturally, it is a very dramatic affair, emotionally charged. Informed with the complete lyrics in the liner notes, we can fully experience the poetry and the messages of N'Dour's impassioned pleas. His fluid, flying vocals are accompanied by kora, balafon, oud, guitar, tama (talking drum), violin and earth-shaking keyboards. Knowing no background at all, the music would be moving; as the soundtrack to for Yousson N'Dour and a continuing cry for the courage to be tolerant.

- By Lark Clark

Rae Spoon

Love Is A Hunter (Saved By Radio)

Love Is A Hunter is Rae Spoon's most danceable album to date. It's a sonic exploration of identity, contradiction and longing. He's shifted gears from country crooning and colonialism to queercore, disco balls and the quest for belonging and community.

We Can't Be Lovers is the quintessential indie rock song for anyone who has struggled to muster up the gumption to try to take someone home after a night of dancing and flirtation, while Love Is A Hunter relays the primal, almost animalistic aspects of desire-take it or leave it. Part acoustic ballad, part country song, Joan is the ultimate love song to the trans community featuring a duet with The Cliks' front man, Lucas Silveira.

Once the club lights go up and life continues on, some lovers linger while others drift out to sea on You Can Dance. Lighthouse wades through the various waves of intimacy and internal undress.





Michael McGoldrick

Aurora finds Michael McGoldrick following in the footsteps of 2000's Fused and 2005's Wired with a set of songs and tunes showcasing his thaumaturgical skill on flute and pipes. As such, there are few surprises: glorious original tunes, top-knotch supporting ensemble, and brilliantly tasteful production from Capercaillie's Donald Shaw (nobody does "modern traditional" better).

The one small revelation this time around is on track 9, Waterbound, where we get to hear Michael's singing voice on a Dirk Powell composition. Both song and singer ain't half bad and I would be quite pleased to hear more of the like from him in future. Otherwise, Aurora will cement McGoldrick's position as a singular talent in the field of traditional music, both as a writer and performer.

- By Richard Thornley

Dave Swarbrick

Raison D'Etre (Shirty)

Known best for his work with Fairport Convention and Martin Carthy, the inimitable Mr. Swarbrick now steps into the limelight with a fine collection of recordings he has assembled at various points over the past eight years.

Having undergone a double

lung transplant in 2004, and seen his obituary prematurely published in a British newspaper, it would be a fair assumption to say he is glad to be alive. That is certainly the impression gained from listening to this collection. He breezes his way through jigs, reels, hornpipes, waltzes and goodness knows what else with verve and aplomb.

If there is a jauntier fiddler on the planet than him, I would love to hear them play. He can also tackle slower, more sedate material with great depth and feeling. Any fiddler worth his or her salt will want to listen to this and, if they have any sense, steal a bit from this almost-lamented master.

- By Tim Readman

Sandy Denny and The Strawbs

All Our Own Work: The Complete Ses-SIORS (Witchwood Media)

If you harken back to the state of folk in '67, you might figure this re-release - with its cheesylooking graphics-for another twisted cash grab, based on the notoriety of its soon-to-be-famous players. With the opening strains of On My Way, delivered with gusto by Sandy Denny and her Strawberry Hill Boys (only recently shortened to Strawbs). you'd quickly realize your error-that you'd almost passed

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on an integral piece of English folk-rock history.

That Sandy Denny has ascended to the iconic state of folk-rock's greatest vocalist is reinforced here and, despite the early state of this "open-mic" Danish recording, its sound is robust, rich and full. The wit and songwriting sophistication of Dave Cousins-and the promise soon to be realized in the prog-rock of his post-Sandy Strawbs-is audible across songs like How Everyone But Sam Was A Hypocrite and All I Need Is You. His ever-virile vocals and uncanny gift with a song is readily heard in a demo of Indian Summer.

Released over the years in a number of forms, this collection complements the dozen originals with outtakes, alternate takes and early demos. Study them.

Elements of the Strawberry's bluegrass-loving roots are heard (the banjo-fuelled Wild Strawberries and superbly picked Sail Away To The Sea) along with liberal doses of Sgt. Pepper-inspired psychedelia (Tell Me What You See In Me), the latter eventually propelling the Denny-less Strawbs towards their progressive perch in rock history.

There's an endearing innocence that's audible here, recalling North American counterparts like The Mamas and the Papas, Judy Collins, Joni Mitchell, if not Britain's own Hollies. It's a creative, historic and exciting time as folk merges with rock and tomorrow's superstars clamour for their rightful footing. For those reasons alone, this is well worth owning.

- By Eric Thom

Michael Weston King

I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier

The title of Michael Weston King's latest album isn't entirely original. An unknown group called Eli Radish released a similarly titled album on Capitol in the late '60s. That album of war-related songs was unremarkable whereas King's album is well nigh indispensable for fans of protest songs, not to mention a very worthy addition to his impressive body of work. The album's title track, which was actually banned in England and France after it was first recorded in 1915, was written by Alfred Bryan, a pacifist songwriter born and raised in Canada. King gave it a fresh new melody and makes the song relevant to a new generation.

Besides adding a melody to

Langston Hughes's Life Is Fine poem, King also wrote three new songs, including the very moving Hev Ma, I'm Coming Home, which cleverly references Paul Simon's Homeward Bound. the song title alluding to coming home from war in a casket.

Other songs include Roosevelt Sykes's High Price Blues and a few that are quite well known, namely Dylan's I Pity the Poor Immigrant and two contributions from Phil Ochs (Cops of the World and Is There Anybody Here?). The album ends with a heartfelt solo performance of Bobby Darin's Simple Song of Freedom. King's latest album eloquently reminds us that when it comes to such things as justice and war, plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

- By Paul-Emile Comeau





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Ruth Moody

The Garden (Red House Records)

As a founding member of the The Duhks and the Wailin' Jennies, Winnipeg's Ruth Moody has already put together a 13-year career that most musicians should envy. Although being a member of a successful group is very satisfying, it is an entirely different matter putting yourself on the line alone to face criticism or compliments. Well, Moody has taken that giant step with her first solo release. And from here on in it is kudos that she'll harvest from The Garden. The project showcases the voice she was blessed with, a voice that can be well associated with her family name.

It is a moody and wonderful collection of songs that Ruth can be very proud of. Although it is her project, she has a long list of guest artists helping weed, fertilize and making this garden grow, including the Jennies, former Duhks, Luke Doucet, Oh Susanna and Matt Peters, who does a wonderful duet with Ruth on their co-written song We Can Only Listen.

All in all, Moody has done a wonderful job on The Garden - a superb solo project from one of Canada's premier musicians. Long may she continue gardening as we reap the benefits of her bounty.

- by les siemieniuk

Eliza Carthy and **Norma Waterson**

Variously referred to as members of British folk's great dynasty, folk music titans, twin pillars of modern English folk music, and the royal family of folk, this is the first release for this mother and daughter team as a performing duo. In spite of those high and mighty labels, you could not hope to hear a



more earthy, eclectic and easygoing collection of music.

While others fuss over ideas such as authenticity and interpretation, the two of them just get down to business. They grab songs and sounds from pop, folk, jazz, and blues and stamp them with their unmistakable identity. Whether it is the Americana of Poor Wayfaring Stranger, the child ballad The Rose and Lily or the nutty combination of Ukulele Lady and (If Paradise Is) Half As Nice, each and every song here is delivered with passion and depth. Great stuff from two fine Yorkshire lasses.

- By Tim Readman

Fay Hield

Looking Glass (Topic Records)

Northern England's Fay Hield is the former leader of the four-piece a cappella group The Witches of Elswick, which disbanded in 2007. Since then she has been crafting a repertoire based on research of many texts such as Songs of the Ridings, The Oxford Book of Ballads, and the folksong collections of Ralph Vaughan Williams and the writings of Rudyard Kipling.

The result is a fabulous choice of material littered with dark tales, tall stories, laments and love songs. She is mainly accompanied by Bellowhead's John Boden on fiddle and concertina, Sam Sweeney on fiddle and Jess Arrowsmith on vocals. Their sparse and tasteful contributions are a perfect backdrop for Hield's earthy singing style. She really knows how to tell a story in song, and her delivery pulls you in and makes you listen. Fans of Norma Waterson, June Tabor and Maddy Prior will find much to admire here. Top drawer!

- By Tim Readman

Old Blind Dogs

Wherever Yet May Be (Compass)

Old Blind Dogs continue to scamper along, with only Jonny Hardie remaining from the band's first incarnation in the early '90s. Despite their long history, Wherever Yet May Be sounds like a band revitalized and still decidedly relevant. As always, it's a mix of songs and tunes, traditional and original, and mostly Scottish in origin or style. Highlights include Copper Kettle, a song learned from OBD founding member Ian Benzie; a nice take on the well-known Lough Erne's Shore featuring some blistering pipes from the band's newest

member, Ali Hutton; and Portobello, an incredible set of tunes full of fire and grace. There are some nice touches, like the slide guitar decorations here and there, but at its heart this is iust Scottish traditional music played with passion and an uncanny amount of skill. And shouldn't that be enough?

- By Richard Thornley

Tim Hus

Hockeytown (Stony Plain Records)

Not generally one to toot my own horn, six short years have proved my original review of Tim Hus correct. He has become a Canadian and Albertan institution. Even Stompin' Tom Connors agrees in print Hus is the heir apparent to his crown. Discs like this are practically beyond review. You can talk about the skill of the backing musicians. like Ron Casat on accordion, or Charlie Hase on steel guitar and Dobro, or the fine job Barry Allen did of producing and mixing the disc at Homestead Recorders but the material itself is so classically Canadian it's somewhat pointless to discuss the subject

Do you criticize Tim Horton's, Molson Canadian, or the Stanley Cup for being what they've always reliably been?

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You either get it or you don't. If you get it, you consume it, if you don't then buy something else. To paraphrase Popeye: it is what it is and that's all that it is.

- By Barry Hammond

Dana Wylie Band

Something's Going To Happen Here (Rawlco Radio)

Maybe it's her background in musical theatre, for which she trained at Edmonton's Grant MacEwan Centre for the Arts, but this Biggar, SK, native has a terrific knack for pulling the listener in with her handling of a lyric. Not only that, but they're interesting lyrics and sung in a lovely, clear, appealing voice.

That's no mean feat these days with all the competition out there but this artist also stands out from the pack with the maturity of her musical vision, which combines elements of folk (she does a lovely cover of the traditional song *Black Jack Davy*), pop and jazz (check the bass runs of sideman Nye Parsons, references to Wynton Marsalis in the lyrics, and her own pretty terrific Joni Mitchellesque piano). Honing her chops in Taiwan and the U.K. probably helped, too.

This is the artist's third release—after Almost There (2006) and The Unruly Ones (2008)—and may be her best yet. Whatever, she's the only artist this critic has EVER felt comfortable comparing favourably to Joni Mitchell in the scope of her talent. Great production by guitarist Matthew Ord and fine playing by the session musicians, like Cam Neufeld, make this a real

keeper. If you haven't heard of her yet, you will.

- By Barry Hammond

Feufollet

En Couleurs (Feufollet Records)

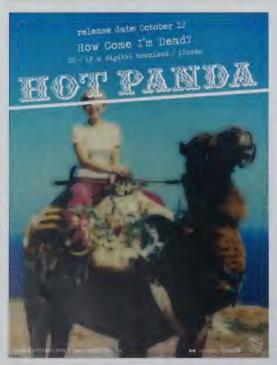
When La Bande Feufollet (as they were called then) released its first album in 1999 the average age of the band's six members was 12, the youngest being nine, the oldest 14. The fact that it was an auspicious debut was borne out by the fact that the album was produced by Steve Riley. The group didn't waste much time living up to its promise and, several albums later, the group still includes three of the original members.

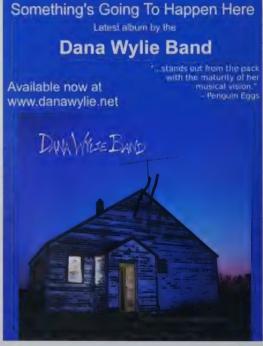
The sextet is innovative yet firmly rooted in tradition, with all three vocalists singing in French. Anna Laura Edmiston sings a beautiful a cappella version of the traditional Assis dans la fenêtre de ma chambre. The group brings a light-hearted approach to a sad, traditional song called Ouvre la porte by cleverly incorporating subtle use of toy piano, glockenspiel and omnichord (a digital autoharp from the '80s).

Edmiston and other members of the band wrote half of the songs with the rest of the album consisting of vintage material from the likes of Dennis McGee, Ed Deshotels and Adam Hebert. The album title refers to the four instrumental tracks throughout the album named after colours.

As the group proved with its Cow Island Hop album (2008), Feufollet manages to be both creative and modern while still exploring a distinctly Cajun sound

- By Paul-Emile Comeau





Chrissy Crowley

The Departure (Independent)

Peter Ostroushko

When the Last Morning Glory Blooms

Kierah

A Fiddle Affair (Independent)

Chelsea Sleep

Simple Song (Independent)

Gabe McVarish

Eclection (Greentrax Recordings)

Rua MacMillan

Tyro (Greentrax Recordings)

Duo DuvalBoulanger

Pieces Sur Pieces (Independent)

The second release from Cape Breton's Chrissy Crowley has some fine moments that help her to stand out from the crowd—which takes some doing, coming from that island of great fiddlers. She has a lovely energetic feel to her playing, especially on the reels, which form most of the material on this album.

Her sound is earthy and gritty and downright grungy when it has to be. Pianist Jason Roach provides solid backing with a great bouncy feel, while skilful guitarist Ian Hayes also adds some tasty banjo and fiddle. The treatment is mainly traditional, but every now and then she'll throw in a surprise beginning or ending, or an unexpected twist, like the use of steel drums on the title track. Recommended.

The latest offering from the Emmy Award-winning composer, violinist and mandolinist Peter Ostroushko is a collection of instrumentals blending a host of contemporary and traditional sounds. A lot of his work has been in writing soundtracks, which is what this sounds like, too. It's very smooth but there's nothing much here that really engages or sounds like folk music to me.

Kierah is obviously musically gifted and her blend of Canadian and Celtic fiddle styles is



skilfully executed. She is ably backed by Andy Hillhouse on guitar and Troy MacGillvray on piano on this collection of traditional, contemporary and original tunes

Fiddler Chelsea Sleep is a former star student of Oliver Schroer's who breathes personality into this set of well-chosen, simple songs, some old, some new and some originals, too.

Former U.S. Junior National Scottish Fiddle Champion, Northern California's Gabe McVarish has a great feel for Scottish and Cape Breton fiddle music. He shines on this, his first solo outing. You can also hear him in the Gaelic supergroup Daimh.

Rua MacMillan, 2009's BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year, is mainly backed by Tia Files on guitar and Adam Brown on bodhran on this excellent collection. His fiddling is fresh and invigorating. Well worth a listen

Pieces Sur Pieces is traditionally based music from Quebec played on flute and fiddle with some accompaniment from guitar or piano. There are airs, gallops, reels and brandies.

The latter are triple-meter tunes particularly beloved by this duo and especially relished by step dancers.

David Boulanger provides fiddles and foot percussion while Jean Duval weighs in with flutes and whistles. This is good-time, driving music that might drive you to dance, especially if you have had a couple of the liquid kind of brandies as you listen!

- By Tim Readman

Jimmy Webb

Just Across the River (El Music)

While best known for his many hits recorded by country star Glenn Campbell, everyone from Nina Simone to R.E.M covered Jimmy Webb's songs

Just Across the River is a collection of Webb's beautifully crafted hits featuring an eclectic group of guests. From Jackson Browne to Billy Joel, the stars add their own spice to this mostly country flavoured 13 song release.

Glenn Campbell provides a respectable assist on his massive Webb written hit *By The I Get to Pheonix* and Mark Knopfler's seductive guitar adds

Reviews

remarkable depth to the track.

If You See Me Getting
Smaller, featuring Willie Nelson,
maybe Webb's strongest vocal
effort on the project and comes
with notes crediting Waylon
Jennings for the title as it was
a line Jennings tossed out in
disgust at a television producer.

Linda Ronstadt's rich alto is brilliant on All I Know. I Was Too Busy Loving You, with gorgeous harmonies from J.D. Souther, may require a tissue for the recently broken hearted.

Alt country fans might go straight to *Galveston* to hear Lucinda William's version, but the rich production does not flatter her edgy vocals.

If your musical tastes run to raw this disc will be a little too pretty, but Just Across the River illustrates just why songwriters of virtually every genre revere Jimmy Webb and it just might introduce some great songs to a new generation.

- By Ruth Blakely

NEeMA

Watching You Think

(Independer

With a line drawing portrait by Leonard Cohen for artwork and production credits by the lord of song, NEeMA's latest release, Watching You Think, quickly garners media atten-



Reviews

tion. Cohen aside, Montreal's NEeMA is in a league of her own.

Her cover of Dire Straights' Romeo and Juliet brings me back to the Empire Records soundtrack, a film that any music/record store buff should see and begs for a mix CD creation for an old friend. Unwinding is for those protective of their hearts.

As a lover of spoken word, Eternity opens with existential musing and flows into the heartache all hearts must endure. A sleepy ode to clinging to the past, Sidewalks is a song of selfforgiveness. Bone to Pick with Time echoes a need to take life in stride despite wanting to rush and tug at the season. Jealousy is the darkest, most intriguing track on the album.

- Shannon Webb-Campbell

Jon Langford and Skull Orchard

Old Devils (Bloodshot Records)

Welsh-born, Chicago-based Jon Langford, member of the 1980s punk band The Mekons and country-punk band Waco Brothers, teamed up with Skull Orchard (fellow Waco Brothers Alan Doughty on bass, Joe Camarillo on drums and Jim Elkington on guitar) for his latest release, Old Devils.

Old Devils is a cracker from start to finish. It is well-produced with brilliant, clean guitar riffs and great, old-fashioned rock licks. The songwriting is intelligent and introspective, with a strong smattering of humour and sardonic wit. Songs like 1234 Ever and Getting Used To Uselessness are reminiscent of an edgier Rockpile. The album has the

maturity of someone who has lived and played hard but is not ready to slow down. It's as if Langford has tapped into Joe Strummer's Mescaleroera soul. *Old Devils* is folk music for punk rockers fighting against the dying of the light.

— By Phil Harries

Bonnie Prince Billy and the Cairo Gang

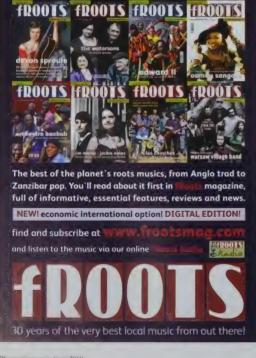
The Wonder Show of the World (Palace

Given all that has been written about Will Oldham since he burst out of Kentucky onto the contemporary American folk music scene, like his namesake, from whom he took the moniker, people take sides and the bonnie prince is either the pretender to the throne of folk music singer-songwriters or the genuine heir. Some say the



verdict is still out while others say he has rightfully claimed his birthright.

All I know is, that after 15 albums in 11 years under the title of the bonnie prince, and several previous to his settling on the nom de plume, the man can still instantly get your at-





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tention with the first words out of his mouth on the album.

"I once loved a girl, but she couldn't take that I visited troublesome houses."

And it just continues on in that vein. His past works have featured some lovely collaborations and *The Wonder Show of the World* is an amazing outing with guitarist Emmett Kelly of the Cairo Gang.

The match is a great pairing—their voices fit together like the components of a great blended whiskey and it's hard to tell who is leading whom. The arrangements fit the songs whether they're sparse or fully packed. This lovely, textured album is about the tangled up in blue situations people get themselves into.

The Wonder Show of the World is a very easy and pleasant listen. Bonnie Prince Billy has always avoided the obvious pitfalls of being prolific—becoming predictable and boring. He's an artist who still surprises and entertains.

- by les siemieniuk

The Skydiggers

The Truth About Us — A 20-Year Retrospective (Maplemusic Recordings)

I guess it really has been 20 years since 1990, when The Skydiggers first appeared. This is a pleasing look back at how good a band they were and still are over the course of two decades. These 22 songs show The Skydiggers at their best.

They were a successful Canadian band, plagued by record company bankruptcies that made some of their records appear and then disappear mysteriously and frustratingly. They solved that problem by forming Maplemusic Recordings, which now has an impressive roster of Canadian releases.

It was fun to once again listen to favourites like I Will

Give You Everything and the still-stunning duet of voices featuring Sarah Harmer and Andy Maize on Dear Henry. As well, we get a terrific version of Good King Wenceslas to play next Christmas. I always liked The Skydiggers for the sound of their guitars—acoustic or electric—always jangly and just right.

I'm not a fan of greatest hits albums because of the myriad reasons bands release them (mostly having to do with laziness), but this one seems to be out for all the right reasons: 20 years running is a reason to celebrate.

- by les siemieniuk

Jakob Dylan

Women and Country (Columbia Records)

Jakob Dylan has come a long way since The Wallflowers and vet full circle, too. Reuniting with T-Bone Burnett, who produced The Wallflowers' 1996 disc, Bringing Down The Horse, his new disc has a maturity that reminds the listener of his father but he still continues to go his own way. He teams up with Neko Case and Kelly Hogan, who together or individually sing backing vocals on eight of the 11 tracks, and such session luminaries as Marc Ribot (guitar), Greg Leisz (pedal steel), Dave Mansfield (fiddle), Jay Bellerose (drums).

The new disc sits firmly in the alt-country camp, which means it's modern but also harkens back to discs like John Wesley Harding and Nashville Skyline, territory his father pioneered, after all. This critic was sceptical of the younger Dylan for many years but has to admit this disc sounds damn good, particularly in the lyric department and the use of the fine horn section with a very original yet retro sound in songs like Standing Eight Count.



The opening track, Nothing But The Whole Wide World. which contains the title in the lines: "I'm here on the blacktop, the sun in my eyes / Women and country on my mind / Both turned me out over the border-line," is also particularly good. Never thought I'd say it, but this is a wonderful recording.

- By Barry Hammond

Herbie Hancock and Friends

The Imagine Project (Blue Note)

Herbie Hancock has a reputation for being in the right place at the right time: his early work with Miles Davis, his film score for Antonioni's *Blow Up*, hitting pop charts with *Watermelon Man*. He has both made and signalled change by the direction of his gaze.

Way back in prehistoric 1973, his *Headhunters* album sampled Pygmy field recordings but, more noticeably, began a reconciliation between jazz and funk, bringing those diverging camps into proximity again.

While it's no longer new to incorporate musicians from all over the world, many of these

collaborations in the past have been hybrid grafts which didn't really take. As the process of globalization hurtles relentlessly onward, Hancock is bringing jazz, his particular pop-jazz, into the arena.

First of all, there are Hancock's choices, not so much from different parts of the globe as from different parts of the musical spectrum. Seal and Konono #1? Tuareg band Tinariwen? Brazilian songstress Céu?

Another reason for praise: Hancock doesn't make his presence felt until the singer or the band has set the style and the mood of the piece. He then enters with a jazz harmony, a distaff perspective, placed with his crystalline touch.

The recording creates the opportunity for the artists to broaden their musical reach. Céu emerges not just as a great groovester but, by demonstrating her complete ease with jazz, takes her place in line to join the Global Diva set. Los Lobos let Tinariwen establish the desert blues vibe then chime in with Bob Marley's Jah-lyrics,

Reviews



sounding as if this was what they had always meant to say all these years.

Parts of this album have been criticized for being predictable. Do we need another reading of *Imagine* as the New Order Anthem? Apparently we do, as it's the solid lock these musicians have with one another that shows just how far we've come. And how good it's gotten.

- By Lark Clark

Andre Williams

That's All I Need (Bloodshot)

That Andre Williams has lived the life he has and is still able to tell us all about it is a blessing of sorts. The Black Godfather, now 74, barks and croaks like he's 94 but the still-streetwise hustler has done it all on his terms, paying heavily for each diversion. From staff songwriter and producer at both Chess and Motown, Williams evolved from raunchy

R&B roots straight into rehab, emerging in the '90s fronting a roots-punk blitzkrieg, throwing a permanent wrinkle into his Father of Rap rep.

The soundscape behind Williams's banter is still the most significant component in the mix. Famed Detroit guitarist Dennis Coffey teams with Matthew Smith to create a squalling, ever-menacing cacophony to keep the man in proper perspective. Williams talks his way through much of That's All I Need yet the crust baked onto his larynx adds much to his delivery. Tricks lavs down some funk under some insightful lyrics, reminding the listener that this ol' fox still keeps the henhouse awake most nights. Too Light To Fight is a slow, slinky blues approach floating over lethal guitar leads from Coffey and Smith under Williams's rudimentary picking. And if his throaty crow caws prove a little

too raggedy for some ears, all is forgiven with the heartfelt, soulful Amends, an apology that makes effective use of his somewhat time-blasted range, reminding all who listen that Williams remains a colourful character deserving of his audience.

Most important, he remains a credible storyteller, kept current and threatening by the youthful musicians that keep him dangerous.

- By Eric Thom

Various Artists

The Mississippi Sheiks Tribute Concert

If you're a guitar player, there's definitely some tasty licks to be copped from this DVD. The Mississippi Sheiks were a late 1920s and 1930s guitar and fiddle group based around a family named the Chatmons. The two most well-known members were Bo Carter (Armenter Chatmon) and Sam Chatmon, who also recorded on their own. Probably their most famous song is Sitting On Top Of The World, popularized by the likes of Howlin' Wolf, Cream and, lately, Harry Manx. This tribute concert DVD follows on the heels of an audio recording released in October 2009, compiled by the fine roots guitar player Steve Dawson. The venue is the Capilano Performing Arts Theatre in Vancouver. The concert has

a certain looseness (there was only one rehearsal) but the footage is taken from the second night when the musicians obviously felt confident and their affection for both the music and each other is palpable.

In the field of guitar giants, it doesn't get much better than watching Steve Dawson, Alvin Youngblood Hart, Bob Brozman and Dave Alvin demonstrating their art and trading solos. John Hammond contributes a rousing version of Kind Treatment. Music legend Van Dyke Parks is also on hand and Vancouver multi-instrumentalist Daniel Lapp makes his mark all over on fiddle, trumpet. mandolin and tuba. Other artists include Oh Susanna, The Sojourners, Geoff Muldaur, Colin James and Jim Byrnes. One of the stranger choices is avant garde composer Robin Holcomb, who usually is in Nonesuch Records territory but even she's memorable, if out there. No extras but with musicians of this calibre, who needs 'em?

- By Barry Hammond.



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"The Pawnshop Song" Enoch Kent From the album "Take a Trip with Me"



There's watches and there's walkmans near a trombone on a stand, Grandma's antique necklace that was passed down hand to hand. A rock guitar and a silver flute that nobody learned to play, wedding gifts still unwrapped from a brighter happier day.

A sliver cigarette case with initials shaped in gems, a decent price and it would be nice if your initials are the same. There's bright gold rings for women and bright gold rings for men, I wonder who will come and buy that golden fountain pen?

We need to pay the rent today or we'll be out upon the street, what can we sell what can we pawn we've got to make ends meet. When I look in the pawn shop window what do I really see? Is this a beautiful arrangement of things not meant to be?

Two people stand together, a young man and his lass, looking for a wedding ring from someone else's past. They whisper and they point, then deciding hand in hand they walk into the shop and buy that old new wedding band.

The ring that they have chosen was pawned a way back when the husband stayed out half the night boozing with his friends. The dream they had was shattered, that dream of wedded bliss when the hand that tenderly held hers turned into a fist.

This pawnshop's been in business for many, many years.
They've heard many, many stories and seen many, many tears.
They're dimming all the lights now on the pawnshop floor and locking up the stories as they lock the pawnshop door.

The Scottish folksinger Dick Gaughan once said that for every thousand songwriters you needed a thousand interpreters; otherwise, when the writer of the song dies, the song dies along with them. To cultivate an interest in performers covering quality folksongs, Penguin Eggs prints a score sheet in each issue. Here we've included Enoch Kent's The Pawnshop Window from his stirring new album Take A Trip With Me. It's available through Borealis Records at www.borealis.com. Much thanks to Enoch who very kindly allowed us to print it here. And much thanks to Pat Simmonds, who deserves our eternal gratitude for transcribing the music with a great deal of grace under pressure.



Le Quartier Français



Le passage du temps

Bernard Simard a littéralement fouillé des milliers de chansons traditionnelles pour son nouvel album Au fil du temps. Yves Bernard a eu le plaisir de découvrir un merveilleux mélange de personnages étranges, de maisons de pain d'épice et de chansons d'amour, qui massacrent plus qu'un troupeau de loups.

epuis trois décennies, on l'a connu avec une vingtaine de groupes de musique trad. C'est l'une des plus belles voix du Québec, une voix très pure qui porte les mots très clairement. C'est aussi un chansonneur, en filiation avec ceux qui ont fait découvrir les textes originaux au fil du temps. Et il vient justement de faire paraître Au fil du temps, un superbe deuxième disque solo qui fait découvrir de nouvelles sonorités comme le swing, le dixie, le cajun et même la musique des mariachis.

Contrairement à son premier album qu'il avait fait paraître avec sa voix et sa guitare comme seul habillage, on retrouve Bernard Simard accompagné d'un quintette. «J'imagine qu'à force de jouer en solo pendant quelques années, je voulais aller vers l'autre extrême», explique-t-il.

Et les musiciens sont tous excellents. Le violoniste André Brunet qui s'est signalé aussi bien avec la Bottine souriante qu'avec le Celtic Fiddle Festival ou De Temps Antan, ajoute des coups de piede et de caisse claire à l'ardeur de son violon pendant qu'Olivier Demers, le violoneux qui se signale avec le Vent du Nord, se permet aussi d'expérimenter des textures discrètes à la guitare électrique.

Il y a aussi le contrebassiste François Marion qui diversifie la palette en grattant ses cordes et en faisant glisser son archet pendant que Jean Boutin s'envole sur des solos dixie à la clarinette ou sur des ambiances mariachis à la trompette. Reste José-Maria Gianelli qui apporte une touche délicatement latine. Ensemble, les artistes peuvent aussi aller vers les sentiers du old time, de la musique manouche et du vieux swing.

Deux points communs à ce répertoire?

La forte personnalité vocale de Bernard qui chante dans toutes les teintes et le résultat des collectes qu'il a réalisées aux Archives de l'Université Laval, là où sont rassemblées des milliers de chansons traditionnelles. « J'essaie de scanner les archives au complet», raconte le chantre de Lanaudière. « Je pige dans ce qu'il y a de bon, puis je vois s'il y a un thème qui se développe à la fin. Pour la réalisation du nouveau disque,

mon barème de recherche tournait autour de 6 000 chansons. J'en ai enregistré à peu près 400 et au bout de la ligne, j'en ai retenu une centaine. Puis, en les travaillant à la guitare, j'ai fini par en conserver treize».

Pourquoi s'intéresse-t-il autant à ces archives? « Pour trouver du matériel original et de nouveaux textes» répond-t-il. «Sinon, il nous faut trouver des chansons apprises de l'un et de l'autre. Mais je ne viens pas d'une famille de musiciens traditionnels et pour moi, le texte est la dimension qui me touche le plus ». À ce chapitre, l'un de ses principales influences demeure le regretté Yves Albert, le folkloriste à la voix de chansonnier qui a également fait connaître des chansons d'archives en les mâtinant de cuivres bien avant la Bottine.

« Entre Yves Albert et moi, il y a une affinité de répertoire. Depuis que je m'intéresse à la musique trad, j'ai toujours trouvé de lui des pièces qui m'allaient très bien. Le Lac à Beauce que je chantais avec la Bottine, de même que plusieurs autres, j'ai appris ça de lui. Je pense qui nos styles sont proches et nous partageons la même envie de choisir de belles mélodies et des textes intéressants», explique Bernard.

Ceux du disque Au fil du Temps le sont particulièrement: un mélange de chants d'amants fidèles ou infidèles et de chansons loufoques qui mettent en évidence des personnages drôles ou des situations surréalistes. Dans son univers, les cloisons des maisons sont faites de pain d'épice, les marins rament dans un canot qui flotte par-dessus l'air et les vieux garçons traînent par terre comme des loups marins. Mais il y a aussi de la chanson à boire ou des histoires où l'amour fait plus de carnages que cent loups dans un troupeau et où le capitaine d'un bateau se jette à la mer pour sauver sa belle.

«Mer et mémoire collective sont de nature semblable. L'une est composée de milliards de petites gouttelettes et l'autre d'innombrables vécus. Si toutes les souvenances humaines pleuvaient aujourd'hui en un même endroit, naîtrait de cette ondée un immense océan où chaque souvenir bourlinguerait», écrit Bernard bien poétiquement sur les notes de pochettes du disque.

Mais il ne s'est pas toujours intéressé à la tradition. À L'adolescence, il tombe dans la marmite du rock et de la musique progressive en écoutant les Black Sabbath, Genesis, King Krimson et Pink Floyd. À



dix-sept ans, il devient chansonnier dans les bars en s'inspirant aussi bien de Cat Stevens que de Félix Leclerc, Claude Dubois et Sylvain Lelièvre, des icônes de la chanson à texte au Québec.

Puis, à la fin des années 1970 le déclic se produit. Appelé à remplacer un guitariste de la Baratte à Beurre, il découvre un nouveau monde. «J'ai poigné la piqûre. Avant ça, je n'aimais pas trop la musique traditionnelle parce que je n'en avais pas trop écouté», raconte-t-il.

À partir de là, le chansonneur ne quittera plus ce monde. Après l'expérience de la Baratte à beurre, on le retrouve au sein de Matante Alys puis de la Bottine souriante de 1983 à 1987. Il optera ensuite pour Manigance, un groupe qui propose un répertoire de chansons des régions de Joliette et de Québec, avant de prendre la direction de la Bretagne où il s'installera de 1992 à 2001. Là-bas, il interprétera du québécois au sein de Gwazigan, des chansons de marins avec Cabestan, des airs bretons avec Matawin. Il lorgnera même l'irlandais avec une touche de rock au sein de Muked.

À son retour dans Lanaudière, il s'associe au Vent du Nord avant de joindre les rangs du Trio à Quatre. Il est aussi du projet Que le yable les emporte!!!, avec Constantinople. En tout, il collabore à l'enregistrement de plus de quarante albums. Son nouveau disque, on l'attendait avec impatience et il n'a pas déçu.

Les oncles sont lâchés lousse

Les Mononcles jouent des airs agréables qui passent des vaudevilles aux chansons françaises du 17e siècle. Tony Montague fait la lumière sur ce quatuor québécois, appartenant à une puissante lignée musicale.

atmosph_re est chaude et suffocante en ce jour de juillet qui marque l'ouverture du Mission Folk Festival. Le Mont Baker brille, gigantesque cone de neige qui se mire dans le bas de la vall_e, pendant que le soleil descend lentement sur la colline. La Grande Veill_e, l'_v_nement ayant lieu sur la grande sc_ne, rassemble cinq groupes traditionnels importants de Qu_bec. Et qui de mieux pour ouvrir le bal que ces nouveaux _Mononcles_, un quatuor form_de musiciens exp_riment_s qui font revivre le folk des ann_es 70?

Trois des Mononcles, l'accord_oniste Normand Miron, le guitariste Andr_ Marchand et le multi-instrumentiste Michel Bordeleau, sont membres des Charbonniers de l'enfer, qui sont aussi au programme avec Galant tu perds ton temps, R_veillons! et Le Vent du Nord.

C'est une grande famille, en fait. Normand, le mononcle moustachu, a trop l'air content quand il entonne G_d_on lÅfAmateur, une chansonnette comique et vaudevillesque de La Bolduc, l_gende qu_b_coise des ann_es 20 et 30. C'est avec verve qu'il chante le refrain dont les paroles changent _ chaque fois et qui comprend le magnifique vers _ou_ ou_ ho ho ho ho, you bet mon chou_, du pur franglais de Montr_al du 20e si_cle. L'ambiance est au rendez-vous, et l'on voit de nombreux sourires dans la foule.

Et c'est ce que veulent Les Mononcles : faire de la musique de la Belle Province, pour le plaisir, avec des arrangements intelligents, de belles harmonies, des phrases instrumentales _tonnantes __rien de trop exp_rimental_ assure l'oncle Andr_, ce g_nie _ lunettes, l'un des fondateurs de La Bottine Souriante en 1976.

_C'est un groupe qui a _ coeur, par-dessus tout, de v_hiculer un certain esprit sur les choses_, dit Marchand, interview_ plus tard dans les coulisses. _Ce n'est aucunement un laboratoire de musique, mais un r_pertoire g_n_ralement l_ger, qui met de l'avant un bel humour ainsi que des rythmes vivifiants. On fait de petites incursions dans la musique d'il y a 100 ans, revisitant les chansons populaires de l'_poque, jou_es sur sc_ne, sur disque et _ la radio sans oublier celles qui appartien-

= Le Quartier Français =

nent _ la tradition orale._

Les Mononcles ont commenc__jouer ensemble il y a quatre ans _ la demande du quatri_me mononcle, et ami de longue date, le bassiste Raynald Dupras.

_Son fils est membre des Cowboys Fringants, c'est un des groupes pop importants au Qu_bec, vous connaissez? Bien, il faisait une s_rie de spectacles pendant les vacances de No_l et il voulait des musiciens traditionnels pour jouer pendant les pauses.

a fait que Raynald m'a appel et j'ai appel_ Normand et il a appel_ Michel, et on a mis ensemble 25 minutes de musique et on a tellement eu de fun_ le faire qu'on a d_cid_ de continuer et de cr_er notre propre r_pertoire._

En 2008, Les Mononcles lancent leur premier album, LÅfAlbum Blanche. Le groupe utilise un mat_riel riche et diversifi_, compos_ principalement de chansons, mais aussi, ici et l_, de sets instrumentaux qui en varient la texture. Il y a des chansons qui proviennent de l'ouest de la France comme Par derri_re chez ma tante, une variante de la chanson de route bien connue du 17e si cle Aupr s de ma blonde.

_Au Qu_bec, il doit bien y avoir des centaines de versions diff_rentes de cette chanson, chant_e suivant divers rythmes et tempos, et comportant des refrains tr_s personnels. On a eu notre version pour les Mononcles du regrett_ Gilles Cantin, qui a aussi _t_ un co-fondateur de La Bottine Souriante. Il l'avait appris de sa m_re__

La majeure partie du mat riel des mononcles est traditionnelle bien que les cr_ations de compositeurs connus forment une part importante du _sac _ chansons_ du groupe. Les Mononcles partagent un amour pour les compositions courageuses et d_termin_es de La Bolduc, de son vrai nom Mary Travers, une grande chanteuse et artiste n e en Gasp_sie d'un p_re irlandais et d'une m_re qu_b_coise. _C'_tait une commentatrice sociale, elle parlait des choses de tous les jours et des gens de tous les jours durant les ann es suivant le krach boursier de Wall Street. Elle chantait avec verve et humour. utilisant souvent des chansons traditionnelles. Elle _tait excessivement populaire dans son temps. Elle a vendu quelques 75,000 copies de l'un de ses disques, ce qui est ph_nom_nal pour cette _poque.

_La Bolduc _tait, en effet, la premi_re auteur-compositeur du Qu_bec, c'est une

femme qui a d_laiss_ sa cuisine pour partir en tourn_e avec un groupe. Elle avait l'intention d'am_liorer l'humeur des gens par ses chansons; ÅgD_couragez-vous pas_ _tait son message._

Le r_pertoire des Mononcles comprend aussi le travail d'une autre l_gende de la chanson qu_b_coise, d'une g_n_ration plus r_cente. La prestation du groupe _ la Grande Veill_e du festival comprenait Berlu de Gilles Vigneault, un bon ami des Mononcles.

_Au cours des derni_res ann_es, Les Charbonniers de l'enfer ont _t_ tr_s proches de Gilles, et ils l'_taient m_me avant qu'il ne soit une figure importante pour chacun de nous.

_Gilles ne fait pas de musique traditionnelle comme tel, mais il en a _t_ tr_s
inspir_. Quand il parle des personnages de
son village, il fait r_f_rence aux personnes
qui jouaient et chantaient des chansons
traditionnelles. Nous voulions adapter l'une
de ses chansons au style des Mononcles et
nous avons trouv_Berlu particuli_rement
ad_quate parce sa forme se rapprochait de la
musique traditionnelle et aussi parce qu'elle
abordait un th_me contemporain : c'est
l'histoire d'un gars qui n'a pas d'argent et
qui va chez le marchand pour qu'il lui fasse
cr_dit. On conna_t la chanson..._

_ cause de l'engagement des Charbonniers, Les Mononcles ne sont pas en mesure de partir en tourn_e tr_s souvent pour jouer, sauf _ Qu_bec.

_C'est s_r qu'on aimerait aller dans l'Ouest encore, et partout d'ailleurs, et aussi sortir un autre album, c'est certainement un de nos buts. On ne manque pas de mat_riel. D'abord, ni G_d_on lÅfamateur ni Berlu ne sont sur LÅfAlbum Blanche.

_Mais en ce moment, nous sommes tr_s concentr_s sur Les Charbonniers de lÅfenfer qui vont enregistrer en septembre et qui devraient nous tenir occup_s pour les deux prochaines ann_es; apr_s _a on adorerait en faire plus avec les Mononcles. Nous sommes 1 pour rester, sans aucun doute.

Pour la derni_re chanson de La Grande Veill_e, apr_s un set typiquement intense par Le Vent du Nord, tous les groupes qu_b_cois mont_rent ensemble sur sc_ne et Andr_ amena le public _ chanter les paroles fleuries et romantiques suivantes : _JÅfaime le vin, JÅfamour, mesdames, jÄfaime le vin_.

S'accompagnant de gestes inspir_s, Andr_s'assura qu'aucune traduction ne serait n_cessaire. Rassembl_s autour des micros, les trois autres oncles ainsi que la panoplie de neveux, de ni_ces et de cousins, chantaient en parfaite harmonie, savourant chaque syllabe jusqu'_la fin. Ouel d lice!

Les musiciens des Mononcles s'amusent et nous en font profiter _ l'ancienne : tranquillos... You bet mon chum.

- Traduit par Jane Ehrhardt

NEeMA

Watching You Think (Sony)

Fort d'un portrait dessiné au trait de crayon par Leonard Cohen lui-même, et d'un prêt à la production par «le seigneur de la chanson», le dernier album de NEeMA, Watching You Think, a rapidement attiré l'attention des médias. Outre Léonard Cohen, NEeMA, de Montréal, fait partie d'une classe à part.

Sa reprise de Romeo and Juliet, des Dire Straights, me rappelle Empire Records, un film que tous les mordus de cinéma et de musique devraient voir et dont la trame sonore est tellement bonne qu'elle se grave presque toute seule sur la compilation qu'on prépare pour son meilleur ami. Unwinding s'adresse à ceux qui se protègent.

Amoureuse de la langue parlée, Eternity commence avec une réflexion existentielle puis se jette dans les flots de la peine de coeur, que tous les coeurs doivent endurer. Ode endormie à ceux qui se cramponnent au passé, Sidewalk est une chanson qui traite du pardon de soi. Bone to Pick with Time fait écho au besoin d'accepter la vie comme elle est malgré l'envie de courir partout et de défier l'ordre normal des saisons. Jealousy est la chanson la plus sombre et la plus fascinante de l'album.

- Par Shannon Webb-Campbell

- Traduit par Véronique Garneau-Allard



le quadrille à ma tante

a = 110

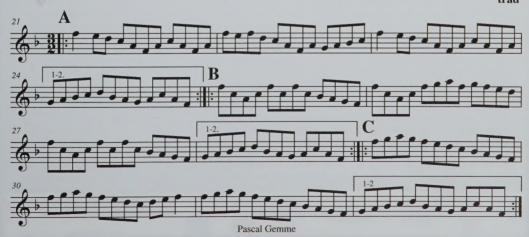
Voici deux brandys plus ou moins tordus provenant de l'excellent disque «pièces sur pièces» du duo Duval/Boulanger. La première pièce a été apprise du répertoire du violoneux Isidore Soucy et la seconde d'un manuscrit de 1820 écrit de la main du violoneux anglais Joseph Kershaw.

Here you have two brandies I learned from the excellent album "pièces sur pièces" from the duo Duval/Boulanger. The first one comes from the repertoire of Québécois fiddler Isidore Soucy and the second from the hand of Joseph Kershaw; an English fiddler who wrote down this tune in a manuscript around the year 1820.

Chip and rant (single hornpipe)

trad

trad



The Opinion Page



Mitch Podolak had a hand in starting most of the biggest folk festivals in Canada. So he knows a thing or two. Here he laments the increasing use of pop bands at folk festivals booked by artistic directors with no clear understanding of their mandates.

As little as 10 years ago, anybody who bought a ticket to a Western Canadian folk festival enjoyed a worldwide cornucopia of traditional and contemporary acoustic musical genres. Where it was appropriate culturally, electric instruments were accepted and encouraged. Think Chicago blues, reggae, zydeco and cutting-edge songwriting such as Billy Bragg or Stephen Fearing. This inclusion of electric instrumentation didn't clash with what was otherwise an acoustic environment.

This even-handed practice provided a balanced offering for festival audiences and was, in every way, part of the folk process. Considering that 90 per cent of the world's music is folk music and that the other 10 per cent of the world's music has been fundamentally influenced by folk music, folk festivals here were once culturally conscious and programmed accordingly. For financial reasons, programming mostly reflected what was available within North America. But within that framework, the variety was immense.

The most fundamental and noticeable

element of festival programming was that the show was primarily acoustic folk music that was never homogeneous. Folk music that is, not pop crossover or make believe folk-rock. The variety of sounds, harmonic vibration and words, provided a strong cultural alternative to the trash that was being produced by the music biz. And it allowed folk festivals to grow.

It was and is possible for a skilled festival artistic director to program an evening simply by taking into account the emotional and energy levels of the performers on the bill. The timing is an art form. That well-poised approach would set up the audience to stand up and scream for thrilling surprises by unknown artists that defied imagination. Joni Mitchell, Xavier Rudd, Queen Ida, Stan Rogers and Leon Redbone immediately come to mind. There is many an artist whose reputation was made on the stages of Canada's folk festivals. Not lately.

This has changed for two reasons. The first is the mythology about marketing the festival. The mythology states that to attract young people it's necessary to offer programming at a lower common denominator. Well, they don't quite use those words but that is the effect. Bullshit! Young people are attracted to a festival just like everybody else: it has to be a fun and excellent human experience. Lowering the cultural denominator only achieves prolonged friendships between artistic directors and their favourite agents. It doesn't promote folk music.

The second reason is that some of the festival artistic directors know a good gig when they see one. They got their jobs without having to demonstrate what they knew about the art form they are supposedly working to benefit. One AD I know doesn't like Celtic music, despite the fact that Anglo-Celtic roots is one of the two main influences within the entire body of North American folk music. Another AD doesn't like folk music at all, and it shows.

In the last few years many of the main stage evening concerts have been populated by drum kits and bass players until the sound has become an endless amount of loud, white noise that doesn't bond with the audience. Eventually the human response is boredom—if you don't get engaged, you get bored – and that happenstance truly illustrates the artistic director's skill level.

For this very reason, I've seen audiences get up and leave early. Folk performers tend to talk to the audience and pop rockers tend to talk at them. The commonality between artist and audience disappears. Eventually this will erode long-term loyalty.

As for the daytime stages, maybe I've been to the wrong workshops the last few years but I haven't heard a sea shanty sung at a western festival in more than 10 years. It has also been eons since I've seen a rabble-rousing political songwriter "get" to a festival audience. I haven't seen a traditional totally acoustic Celtic band at all in at least five years. It's been decades since we've seen an old-time band leading a dance workshop, or any form of clogging, or tap. I haven't seen much traditional blues. The only bluegrass I've seen in the last few years are star acts, and I'm forced to ask about what's upcoming in that seene?

Some ADs don't hire much of anything folkie unless it's the latest flavour of the month. In recent years I've hardly ever seen an unknown acoustic act rock a festival's soul and that's because unknown folk acts almost never get hired anymore due to the booking of bad, unknown pop bands that the so called "artistic directors" claim is the cutting edge of folk music. As if.

Programming by rote and trying to fill the squares on a schedule for the sake of filling them without having an overall understanding of folk music soon becomes obvious to the audience. As the founder of a couple of these large beasts, and as part of the animation of a couple of others, I have become, I guess by default, a receptacle of the criticisms aimed at festivals. Some people provide me with their critiques and some give me shit because they think I'm behind the scenes manipulating everything... I wish.

This year was the all-time extreme for people talking to me about how they felt. Their criticisms had changed from harsh to venomous. I'll leave it to you, dear reader, to figure out which festival won this year's prize for cultural bankruptcy.

Folk music is the people's music and has been since the beginning of time. If these pretend folk festival ADs want a pop festival, they should get off their lazy, well paid, bureaucratic asses and go start one instead of sponging an income off what is beautiful and what they don't really understand, and don't have in their heart or their brain.

the World Of work L'Univers du travail

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FRI/VEN 19 NOV

FRIDAY Evening nominee showcase at the West End Cultural Centre, SATURDAY Afternoon workshops and panel discussions. Ticket info

VENDREDI En soirée, vitrine des finalistes au West End Cultural Centre. SAMEDI En après. midi, ateliers et groupes de discussions. Info billets disponible en ligne

folkawards.ca | prixfolk.ca































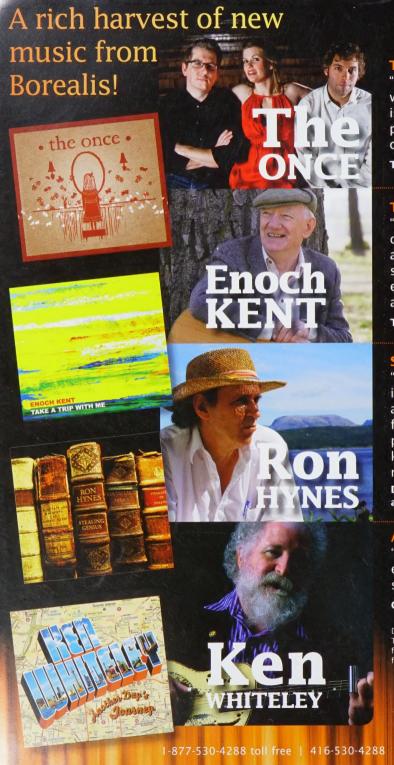












THE ONCE

"...a St. John's based trio whose mastery of harmony is comparable to most people's mastery of breathing..."

The Scope, St. John's

TAKE A TRIP WITH ME

"A folk artist of the finest order, a riveting performer and a compelling yarn spinner... a potent and enriching experience for all who listen."

Toronto Star

STEALING GENIUS

"Ron Hynes, a grand voyeur in this rough, sweet life, a melody writer of the first order, a story teller, a philosopher, a poet, and a kick-ass performer that makes my hair stand on end"

Donna Morrissey, author of Sylvanus Now

ANOTHER DAY'S JOURNEY

"Wonderful, uplifting music, elemental in form and soul stirring in intent."

Greg Quill, Toronto Star

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